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# MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF

## *ROBERT ROBINSON,*

LATE PASTOR OF THE

BAPTIST CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

OF

## *PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,*

AT

## CAMBRIDGE;

*IN FOUR VOLUMES:*

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

BRIEF MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

## VOL. III.

*HARLOW:*

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A

# PLEA

FOR THE

# DIVINITY

OF OUR

# *LORD JESUS CHRIST:*

IN A

PASTORAL LETTER

ADDRESSED TO A

CONGREGATION

OF

*PROTESTANT DISSENTERS*

AT

CAMBRIDGE.

[THE FOURTH EDITION, PRINTED 1780.]

TO THE

# CONGREGATION

OF

*PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,*

ASSEMBLING AT THE MEETING HOUSE

IN

ST. ANDREW'S, *CAMBRIDGE*

# A PLEA &c.

My Christian Brethren:

ALTHOUGH the doctrine of our Saviour's divinity hath been so often and so fully examined, that nothing new remains to be said, yet three considerations induce me to address to you the following reasons to confirm your belief of it.

First. The doctrine itself is important. It regards the OBJECT of our worship. Either Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, or his worshippers are guilty of idolatry.

Next, I wish to preserve that just distinction, which the first founders of your congregation taught you, and which you have hitherto retained; I mean, a DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE VIRTUE OF A CHARACTER AND THE TRUTH OF A DOCTRINE. Your first pastors, the one a fellow of Clare-hall, the other a fellow of Trinity, along with two thousand other clergymen, quitted their preferments in the established church, rather than resign the godlike privilege of self-determining in matters of religion: but at the same time they taught you not to take their doctrines for true because of their resignation; but to examine them yourselves, and to judge of

their truth by their conformity to the holy scriptures. The reverend and worthy clergymen, who have lately resigned their livings in the established church rather than act the hypocritical part of worshipping a person, the evidence of whose divinity they could not perceive, have ascertained by their conduct the rectitude of their consciences, the virtue of their characters ; but they do not pretend to rest the truth of the doctrine on the merit of their resignation. They conscientiously offer arguments against the divinity of Jesus Christ. We venerate their conscientiousness ; but we think their arguments inconclusive.

Lastly. *We wish to cherish that amiable spirit of* TOLERATION, *which reigns among you ; but to preclude an* ABUSE *of it.* Your present social happiness proceeds from this spirit ; and your happiness will last as long as your moderation continues; but should you ever, under pretence of candour and moderation, become indifferent to all religious principles, you would pervert the best disposition to the worst purpose. A firm attachment to principles of your own, is perfectly compatible with an extensive charity to those, who discover an attachment as firm to principles diametrically opposite.

Let it not seem strange to you, my brethren, that those gentlemen, who have lately embraced the belief of our Lord's mere humanity, should engage the church in religious controversy. They have done what every conscientious man ought to do. They have endeavoured to free the disciples

of Christ from a supposed error in the doctrine of their master's nature. They have begun the controversy in a spirit of candour and benevolence. Controversy does not deserve to be called religious, unless it be religiously managed; that is to say, unless it be managed with all that good faith, undaunted courage, and extensive benevolence, which the gospel recommends. There is the highest reason for this way of disputing. It is founded on the nature of things. He, who never doubted a religious truth, never believed it. Merit and demerit do not consist in believing, or in disbelieving, a truth; but in paying, or in not paying, that attention to the evidences of it, which its nature and importance require. A fiery passionate dispute about the deity is not a religious controversy; it is a dark, diabolical quarrel about God.

It would ill become frail fallible men, it would worse become protestant dissenters, who every day sacrifice to religious liberty, to assume a dictatorial air in matters of faith. What I am going to offer to you on the divinity of Jesus Christ appears to me the truth: but perhaps I am deceived; for *who can understand his errors?* and should I ever discover the deception, I would retract my error. At present I affirm, because I believe, that JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY AND PROPERLY GOD.

Before we enter immediately on the evidences of the doctrine, let us discharge it from some incumbrances, which, having been associated with it, weaken its evidence; but which have really nothing to do with the doctrine itself.

First. We give up St. *Athanasius*. We plead for the divinity of Jesus Christ, and not for that *explication* of it, which is contained in a creed commonly attributed to him. The damnatory clauses in that creed savour of the violent spirit of his times, and have generally been thought harsh and uncharitable.

Secondly. We do not propose a *distinct address* in prayer to one divine person *exclusive* of another divine person. The three persons in the deity may be distinguished; but cannot be divided. God is one undivided essence, and to him, the one God, is our worship addressed, through the mediator Jesus Christ.

Thirdly. We do not justify any of those *similitudes*, which either ancient or modern writers have used in attempting *to explain* the nature of God. God, we think, is a being without parallel, and therefore inexplicable. There is not a nature like his in all the universe. Were an intelligent being to comprehend the nature of every created being in our system; were he to pass millions of ages in passing from system to system, in studying and comprehending the natures of other created intelligences; there would still remain one nature, that of the Supreme Being, in possession of some peerless peculiarity, which had not its likeness in all the Creator's unbounded empire, so that it would never be in the power of this intelligent being, with all his knowledge, to select a creature, and to say of it,—This being subsists exactly as the Supreme Being subsists. Now, according to our notion, as all our

knowledge of invisible objects is obtained by analogy, that is, by the resemblance, which they bear to visible objects; and as there is in nature no exact resemblance of the nature of God; an attempt to explain the divine nature seems absurd and impracticable.

Fourthly. We do not think it necessary to enter on *learned arguments.* A doctrine supported only by criticisms, the understanding of which requires much literary skill, is certainly not a doctrine intended for the bulk of mankind. All truths, which fall under the notice of both the learned and unlearned part of mankind, are subject to learned objections and to popular objections; and consequently, they are to be defended by learned and by popular arguments. A plain christian ought to propose his own doubts, if he have any, about the truth of a doctrine; but, when his own doubts are removed by the force of plain, popular reasoning, he ought not to suffer his mind to be bewildered in greek and hebrew characters, the reasonings on which he does not understand. It is the glory of all the doctrines of christianity, and particularly of that of Christ's divinity, to give evidence to common observation, and to plain good sense.

Fifthly. We renounce every notion of a right to *persecute* those, who disbelieve the doctrine of Christ's divinity. You, my brethren, have borne a noble testimony against guarding the doctrines of christianity by penal sanctions, by joining above nine hundred of your sister churches in a petition

to parliament for relief in the matter of subscription to human articles of faith. We have nothing to wish for you on this article, but that your church-record may ever remain unsullied with one act of expulsion for conscience sake. Love is the law of your society, truth the judge to explain it.

Sixthly. We disown what, we think, our opponents incautiously imply. We are, say they, *Unitarians*. We reply, so are we. Our dispute is not, whether there be one God, or three Gods; but whether the divinity of Jesus Christ be incompatible with the unity of God, which unity both sides believe. There are difficulties on both sides. It must, however, be allowed, that on our side the difficulty lies in the *object*, which is not at all wonderful. On the opposite side the difficulty lies in the *terms*, as we shall observe presently, which, were the matter as our opponents think, would be astonishing indeed.

Finally. We go on the ground, which St. Paul hath marked out, on which he went of old against the philosophers of his day, and on which only, in our opinion, the subject is defensible. *We walk by* FAITH, *and not by* SIGHT; that is to say, the course of our lives is directed by the belief of certain principles, which we could not have discovered, which we cannot comprehend; but which we believe on the testimony of the revealer. You cannot be ignorant, my brethren, that St. Paul opposed the WISDOM OF GOD, against PHILOSOPHY, which he called the WISDOM OF THIS WORLD, and which, he said, *the Greeks sought after.*

The philosophy of the Greeks was that science of God, and of the chief good, which was grounded not on the testimony of any superior intelligence, but on the speculations and discoveries of their own reason. He, who understood this, was termed a *wise* man. A *believer*, on the contrary, was one, who, convinced of the imperfection of his own reason, derived his religious ideas from the testimony of that superior intelligence Jesus Christ. In this wise plan, capacity, learning, accuracy of sentiment, were not essentially necessary. The exercise of a little plain common reasoning to obtain evidence of the credibility of the teacher was sufficient.

We go on the same ground. Having experienced the imperfection of our own reason, and being perplexed with the numerous and dissonant reasonings of philosophers on the nature of God, we turn to Jesus Christ, and, perceiving evidences of the truth of his mission, we give credit to his propositions, although, we confess, there are several of them, which we cannot comprehend. This very idea of christianity is a strong argument for its divinity; for no religion can be divine, which doth not adapt itself to the illiterate, that is, to the bulk of mankind. Indeed, on this article, there is very little difference between wisdom and folly; and we might as well expect to see a smaller circle contain a greater, as to see a finite intelligence comprehend the idea of an infinite God. The homely peasant is an insect crawling on the earth; the most polished son of science is an insect on the

wing: at what an inconceivable distance are both from the matchless majesty of God!

Our question, then, reduced to its true size, is this; what idea does the new testament mean to convey of the NATURE of Jesus Christ? The proper answer, I humbly conceive, is, the writers of the new testament meant to inform their readers that JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY AND PROPERLY GOD.

In proof of this, my brethren, let me exhort you to attend to the following directions.

I. *Consult the language of the new testament, and compare it with the state of the pagan world at the time of its publication.* If Jesus Christ were not God, the writers of the new testament discovered great injudiciousness in the choice of their words, and adopted a very incautious and dangerous style. From whatever cause it proceeded, mankind have always discovered a strong propensity to idolatry. The whole world, except the small kingdom of Judea, worshipped idols at the time of Jesus Christ's appearance. Jesus Christ; the evangelists, who wrote his history; and the apostles, who wrote epistles to various classes of men; proposed to destroy idolatry, and to establish the worship of one only living and true God. To effect this purpose, it was absolutely necessary for these founders of christianity to avoid confusion and obscurity of language, and to express their ideas in cool and cautious style. That distance, which is between the supreme, independent, first cause, and the most elevated creature, being infinite, every word that tended to diminish it, would

have been not only a logical incongruity; it would have been a source of dangerous errors in theology. Paul and Barnabas had seen a miracle and a sermon procure an offer of their own deification at Lystra; and the general disposition of the heathens afforded them a strong probability, that the history of Jesus Christ, which is made up of miracles and sermons, expressive of extraordinary wisdom and power, would procure a deification also of him. If Jesus Christ be only a creature, the distance between him and the creator God is beyond all conception infinitely greater than that between Jesus Christ and Paul; and Jesus and Paul being both creatures, on different lines, indeed, in the scale of being, but both at a distance infinitely remote from the self-existent God, it would signify very little to which of the two the honours of the Deity were transferred. We naturally expect, that men, who *rent their clothes* * in abhorrence of confounding the creature with the Creator, should express the nature of God, and the natures of all creatures, in the most circumspect language. In speaking of Jesus Christ, where the temptation to idolatry was the stronger, we naturally expect a more than ordinary caution; the case required it.

The writers of the new testament knew these things. They professed to lay aside *excellency of speech and of wisdom, and to declare the testimony of God in* WORDS OF TRUTH AND SOBERNESS.† They did more; they spoke, they said, in WORDS WHICH THE HOLY GHOST TAUGHT.‡ I take up

* Acts xiv. † 1 Cor. ii. 1. Acts xxvi. 25. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

the new testament, and read these words of truth and soberness, in which the Holy-Ghost teacheth me the nature of Jesus Christ; and I find these propositions. *The word was* GOD.* GOD *was manifest in the flesh.*† *His name is Emanuel,* GOD *with us.*‡ *John turned many to* THE LORD THEIR GOD.§ *The Jews crucified the* LORD OF GLORY.‖ GOD *purchased the church with his blood.*¶ GOD *laid down his life for us.** *Jesus Christ is* LORD OF ALL.† *Christ is* OVER ALL GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.‡ *We shall all stand, before the judgment-seat of* CHRIST, *so every one of us shall give account of himself to* GOD.§ These are a few of many propositions, which the new testament writers lay down relative to Jesus Christ. If the writers intended to affirm the divinity of Jesus Christ, these *are words of truth and soberness:* if not, the language is incautious and unwarrantable, and to address it to men prone to idolatry for the purpose of destroying idolatry, is a strong presumption against their inspiration.

Two considerations render this reflection the more important. First, the Greek language, in which these authors wrote, was not a poor contracted tongue; but "*from its propriety and universality, it was made for all that is great, and all that is beautiful, in every subject, and under every form of writing.*"‖ By the richest words in this copious language the new testament writers describe Jesus Christ. The language would have

* John i. 1. † 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ Mat. i. 23. § Luke i. 16.
‖ 1 Cor. ii. 8. ¶ Acts xx. 28. * 1 John iii. 16. † Acts x. 36.
‡ Rom. ix. 5. § Rom. xiv. 10. 12. ‖ Hermes, b. iii. ch. 5.

afforded lower terms to express an inferior nature; but it could have afforded none higher to express the nature of the Supreme God.

Farther. These authors addressed their writings not to the literati, to philosophers and scholars; but to the common people; and consequently they used words in their plain popular signification. The common people, it seems, understood the words in our sense of them; for, in the Diocleſian persecution, when the Roman soldiers burnt a Phrygian city inhabited by christians, *men, women, and children* submitted to their fate, *calling upon* CHRIST THE GOD OVER ALL.*

II. *Compare the style of the new Testament with the state of the Jews at the time of its publication.* The Jews, who in earlier ages had been given to idolatry, had been freed from that fatal propensity in the Babylonish captivity. Moses and the prophets had given them a written revelation of the one living and true God, and had described him by select names and titles, the application of which to any other beings they had positively forbidden. In the time of Jesus Christ the Jews were zealous defenders of the unity of God, and of that idea of his perfections, which their scriptures excited. Jesus Christ, and his apostles, professed the highest regard for the Jewish scriptures. They constantly appealed to them. They directed people to search them. They declared, *the scriptures could not be broken.* Yet the writers of the new Testament described Jesus

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. viii. cap. 2.

Christ by the very names and titles by which the writers of the old Testament had described the Supreme God.

| The TITLES given to GOD in the Jewish Scriptures. | The TITLES given to CHRIST in the Christian Scriptures. |
|---|---|
| *Thou shalt say* I AM *hath sent me.** | *Before Abraham was* I [Jesus] AM.* |
| *I* [Jehovah] *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST.† | *I* [Jesus] *am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST.† |
| *Jehovah your God is* LORD OF LORDS.‡ | *The Lamb is* LORD OF LORDS.‡ |
| THE HIGHEST *himself shall establish Zion*‖ | *John went before the face of* THE HIGHEST.‖ |
| *The Lord of hosts is* THE KING OF GLORY.§ | *Jesus Christ is* LORD OF GLORY.§ |
| *I will* SAVE *them by* THE LORD THEIR GOD.¶ | *The* SAVIOUR *born is Christ* THE LORD.¶ |
| *Belshazzar lifted up himself against* THE LORD OF HEAVEN.* | *The second man is* THE LORD FROM HEAVEN.* |
| *Jehovah is exalted as* HEAD ABOVE ALL.† | *Christ is* THE HEAD OF ALL *principality and power.*† |

If they, who described Jesus Christ to the Jews by these sacred names and titles, intended to con-

* Exod. iii. 14. † Isa. xliv. 6. ‡ Deut. x. 17. ‖ Psal. lxxxvii. 5. § Psal. xxiv. 10. ¶ Hosea i. 7. * Dan. v. 23. † 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

* John viii. 58. † Rev. i. 11. 17. ‡ Rev. xvii. 14. ‖ Luke i. 76. § James ii. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 8. ¶ Luke ii. 11. * 1 Cor. xv. 47. † Col. ii, 10.

vey an idea of his deity, the description is just, and the application safe: but if they intended to describe a mere man, they were surely of all men the most preposterous. They chose a method of recommending Jesus to the Jews, the most likely to alarm and enrage them. Whatever they meant, the Jews understood them in our sense, and took Jesus Christ for a BLASPHEMER. *We stone thee* said they, *for* BLASPHEMY; *because thou, being a man,* MAKEST THYSELF GOD.*

Should any one of you, my brethren, standing in St. James's Park, and seeing a gentleman carrying in a sedan, preceded by extraordinary attendants, ask a man of veracity, who is he? and should your friend answer, IT IS HIS MAJESTY; IT IS THE KING; IT IS THE KING OF GREAT BRITAIN; would you not instantly take the gentleman in the sedan for our present most gracious sovereign George III? And should it afterwards appear, that the gentleman in the sedan was not his majesty, but one of the secretaries of state, would you not reproach your informer with either ignorance, or a wilful design of imposing on you? These titles are no more descriptive in England of George III. than the titles above were in Judea of the Supreme God. The enemies of Christ took him for a BLASPHEMER; the disciples of CHRIST took him for THE TRUE GOD:† both acted very naturally; both took the titles in the commonly received meaning.

* John x. 33 † 1 John v. 20.

III. *Compare the perfections, which are ascribed to Jesus Christ in the scriptures, with those which are ascribed to God.* Every being hath properties peculiar to itself; and accuracy of description consists in the ascription of its own properties to each individual. Were a philosopher to describe fire by the properties of earth, or earth by the properties of air; were he to ascribe the properties of a rational being to a mere animal; his philosophy, far from instructing his pupils, would confuse and perplex them. The worth of an historian very much consists in his accuracy in characterising the persons, of whom he writes. Had a Roman historian described Numa by the qualities of Nero, or Brutus by the qualities of Antony; his history would have been to the last degree contradictory and contemptible: as well might an English historian fill the history of George II. with the pedantry and tyranny of James I. In divinity, as God and creatures are the objects of our contemplation, it is impossible to use too great a degree of discernment in description; for were a divine to ascribe either the imperfections of creatures to God, or the perfections of God to creatures, the most alarming consequences would follow. The pagan theology was a chaos of confusion on this account. The Jewish theology is pure and chaste in description; it *gives unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name,** and it forbids *the giving of his glory to another.*†

* 1 Chron. xvi. 28, 29. † Isa. xlii. 8. xlviii. 11.

Notwithstanding so many reasons for precision, Jesus Christ declares, ALL THINGS, THAT THE FATHER HATH, ARE MINE;* a very dangerous proposition if he were not God; and rendered more so by those descriptions, which the writers of revelation give of his perfections! They ascribe to him the same perfections, which they ascribe to God. They affirm, *In Christ dwelleth* ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD *bodily.*†

| PERFECTIONS ascribed to God. | PERFECTIONS ascribed to Christ. |
|---|---|
| **ETERNITY.** | |
| GOD *is an* EVERLASTING *king.** | *The name of* THE CHILD *is the* EVERLASTING *father.** |
| JEHOVAH *shall reign for* EVER AND EVER.† | *Unto the* SON *he saith,* THY THRONE *O* GOD *is for* EVER AND EVER.† |
| **OMNIPOTENCE.** | |
| *The name of the* LORD OF HOSTS *is the* MIGHTY GOD.‡ | *The name of* THE CHILD *is* THE MIGHTY GOD.‡ |
| *I* JEHOVAH *appeared by the name of* GOD ALMIGHTY.§ | *I* THE LORD *am* THE ALMIGHTY.§ |

* John xvi. 15.
* Jer. x. 10. † Exod. xv. 18.
‡ Jer. xx. xii. 18. § Exod. vi. 2, 3.

† Col. ii. 9.
* Isa. ix. 6. † Heb. i. 8, &c.
‡ Isa. ix. 6. § Rev. i. 8, 11, 12, 13, 18.

## IMMUTABILITY.

*I Jehovah* CHANGE NOT.*

*Thou* MY GOD *art* THE SAME, *and thy years have no end.*†

*The heavens and the earth shall be changed: but* THOU [the Son] ART THE SAME.*

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME *yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*†

## OMNIPRESENCE.

*Do not I* JEHOVAH FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH?‡

IN ALL PLACES *where I* [Jehovah] *record* MY NAME, *there will I come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*§

*Christ is he,* WHO FILLETH ALL IN ALL.‡

WHERE *two or three are gathered together in* MY NAME, there am I [Jesus] *in the midst of them.*§

## OMNISCIENCE.

*Jehovah is a God of knowledge.*‖

I JEHOVAH SEARCH THE HEART, I TRY THE REINS.¶

*We are sure that thou* [Jesus] *knowest all things.*‖

I, THE SON OF GOD, AM HE, WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS.¶

* Mal. iii. 6. † Psal. cii. 24, 27. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 24. § Exod. xx. 24. ‖ 1 Sam. ii. 5. ¶ Jer. xvii. 10. 1 Kings viii. 39.

* Heb. i. 10. 12. † Heb xiii. 8. ‡ Eph. i. 20, 23. § Matt. 18. 20. ‖ John xiv. 30. ii. 24, 25. xxi. 17. ¶ Rev. ii. 23.

Whatever other excellencies we can conceive in the divine nature are ascribed to God and to Christ in the two following passages. The last is evidently a quotation of the first. *Blessed be thou Lord God of Israel our Father for ever and ever. Thine O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord! and thou art exalted above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.** *Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* This is called *worshipping him that liveth for ever and ever.*† If they, who ascribe the perfections of Deity to Jesus Christ, have fallen into an error, they have been led into it by the writers of the new Testament. It is not credible, that men, who attributed to EVERY SEED *its* OWN *body;* who distinguished the *flesh of* MEN *from that of* BEASTS; *and that of* FISHES *from that of* BIRDS; *the glory of* CELESTIAL *bodies from the glory of* TERRESTRIAL;‡ it is not credible, I say, that such accurate writers could make a mistake so gross as to

* 1. Chron. xxix. 10, &c. † Rev. v. 12, 13, 14. ‡ 1. Cor. xv. 38, &c.

ascribe the excellencies of GOD to a MERE MAN. If Jesus Christ be God, the ascription of the perfections of God to him is proper: if he be not, the apostles are chargeable with weakness or wickedness, and either would destroy their claim of inspiration.

IV. *Consider the* WORKS, *that are ascribed to Jesus Christ, and compare them with the claims of Jehovah.* The supreme God in order to produce the happiness of his creatures, hath displayed the perfections of his nature in several exterior works, and these works are declared by the inspired writers to be evidences of *his eternal power and Godhead.** It would be an act of injustice to God, and a cause of dangerous errors to men, to ascribe these works to any other being. The danger would not lie in ascribing them to one creature rather than to another; but in the ascribing of them to any creature rather than to the true God. What should we think of an historian, who should ascribe the invention of printing to William the Conqueror; the building of Rome to Sir Isaac Newton; the colonizing of America to Julius Cæsar; and the writing of the Pentateuch to Mr. Pope? yet these mistakes in the history of creatures would have no consequences worth mentioning in comparison of those, which the writers of the new Testament have made by ascribing the works of Jehovah to the man Jesus. Nothing can account for their conduct, except in their system Jesus and Jehovah be the same.

* Rom. i. 20.

Is CREATION a work of God? *By Jesus Christ were all things* CREATED, *that are in heaven, or that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him.**

Is PRESERVATION a work of God? *Jesus Christ* UPHOLDS *all things by the word of his power.*† *By him all things* CONSIST.‡

Is THE MISSION OF THE PROPHETS a work of God? *Jesus Christ is* THE LORD GOD OF THE HOLY PROPHETS; and it was THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, *which testified to them beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*§

Is the SALVATION of sinners a work of God? *Christ is the* SAVIOUR *of the world; the* AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION *to all them that obey him.*‖

Is THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN a work of God? *The son of man hath power* TO FORGIVE SINS.¶

The same might be said of the *illumination* of the mind; the *sanctification* of the heart; the *resurrection* of the dead; the *judging* of the world; the *glorification* of the righteous; the *eternal punishment* of the wicked; all which works in one part of scripture are ascribed to GOD, and all which in another part of scripture are ascribed to JESUS CHRIST.

* Col. i. 16. † Heb. i. 3. ‡ Col. i. 17. § Neh. ix. 30. Rev. xxii. 6, 16. 1 Pet. i. 11. ‖ John iv. 42. Heb. v. 9. ¶ Mat. x. 6.

Consider now into what contradictions these writers must fall if Jesus Christ be not God. They contradict one another, they contradict themselves. They degrade writings, which, they pretend, are inspired, below the lowest scribbling of the meanest authors. *In the beginning*, said Moses, GOD *created the heavens and the earth.** It is a mistake, says the Apostle John, *In the beginning* THE WORD THAT WAS MADE FLESH, *made all things, and without him was not any thing made, that was made.*†

Elihu asks, WHO *hath disposed the whole world?*‡ Jehovah asks *out of the whirlwind,* WHO *laid the measures thereof?* WHO *stretched the line upon it?* WHO *laid the corner stone thereof?*§ All the old Testament writers reply, THE LORD OF HOSTS *founded the heavens, the earth, the world, and the fulness thereof.*‖ No such thing, says the Apostle John, THE WORD, *that was made flesh, and dwelt among us, made the world.*¶

Hezekiah looks up to heaven, and says, O LORD GOD *of Israel, thou art* THE GOD, *even* THOU ALONE, *of all the kingdoms of the earth, thou hast made heaven and earth.** Paul lifts up his eyes to Jesus, and says, THY THRONE, O GOD! *is for ever and ever.* THOU LORD *in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of* THY *hands.*† This is Paul's language to his countrymen: but, behold! when the same Paul arrives at Athens, he contradicts him-

* Gen. i. 1. † John i. 1. 14. 3. ‡ Job. xxxiv. 13. § Job. xxxviii. 1. 5, 6. ‖ Psa. lxxxix. 12. ¶ John i. 14. 10. * 2 Kings xix. 15. † Heb. i. 8. 10.

self, and tells the Athenians, that GOD *made the world and all things therein;* HE *is Lord of heaven and earth;* HE *giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.** If Jesus Christ and the Father be ONE † God, all these seeming inconsistencies vanish: if not, it ill becomes such writers to say, *as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.*‡

There have been enthusiasts in England; there was a Hacket in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and there was a James Naylor in the time of Cromwell, who assumed the names and titles of Jesus Christ, and arrogated to themselves those works, which are peculiar to him: one was executed, the other was imprisoned, set in the pillory, and had his tongue bored through for blasphemy, and in vain did he plead that the *honours were not paid to him, but to Jesus Christ, who dwelt in him.* God forbid we should justify such shocking severities. We are sorry that the religious history of our country is stained with blood: but if these men were guilty of a high misdemeanor, (and that they were the most moderate must allow,) in arrogating to themselves the honours of another *man,* how much more guilt must they accumulate, who ascribe to *any man,* to Moses or to Christ, the names, the titles, and the works of the ineffable *God?* If Jesus be a mere man, the distance between Hacket and Jesus is trifling in comparison of the distance of both from the infinite God. The apostles ought to have kept up an idea of

* Acts xvii. 24. 25. † John x. 30. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 18.

this distance. They have not done so: on the contrary, they have ascribed the glories of God to Jesus Christ. Either Jesus Christ is God, or their conduct is unaccountable.

V. *Consider that* WORSHIP, *which the scriptures claim for Jesus Christ.* It is a command of God, repeated by our Saviour, *thou shalt worship* THE LORD THY GOD, and HIM ONLY *shalt thou serve.** Yet these very scriptures command *all the angels of God to worship Christ.*† They say, *at the name of Jesus every knee in heaven, and in earth, should bow.*‡ They command *all men to honour the Son even as they honour the Father.*§ Twenty times in the new testament, *grace, mercy, and peace,* are implored of *Christ*, together with the *Father. Baptism* is an act of worship performed in *his name.*‖ *Swearing* is an act of worship, a solemn appeal in important cases to the omniscient God; and this appeal is made to *Christ.*¶ The committing of the soul to God at death is a sacred act of worship; in the performance of this act Stephen died, saying, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.** The whole host of heaven *worship him, that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb, for ever and ever.*†

The reverend Mr. Lindsey, who says, "that religious worship is appropriated to God;" that "it is incommunicable to any other person whatsoever;" "that it could not be given to any other

* Matt. iv. 10. Deut. x. 20. † Heb. i. 6. ‡ Phil. ii. 10. § John v. 23. ‖ Matt. xxviii. 19. ¶ Rom. ix. 1. * Acts vii. 59. Psa. xxxi. 5. † Rev. v. 13. 14.

without the guilt of idolatry;" yet adds, "unquestionably, Stephen made this request, [Acts vii. 59.] addressed this prayer to the Lord Jesus." Was Stephen then guilty of idolatry? "No," adds Mr. Lindsey, "the blessed martyr *saw* Jesus *with his eyes*, and called him the son of man; but this can be no precedent for directing prayer to him *unseen*, or addressing him as God."* I have a profound respect for this conscientious apologist; but I cannot help astonishment at this reasoning. According to this reasoning, idolatry does not consist in worshipping a creature; but in worshipping an *unseen* creature. The guilt does not lie in the transfer of my worship; but it lies in my *not seeing* the object, to whom the transfer is made. Had all the apostles, had the whole Jewish nation, prayed to Jesus Christ during his abode on earth, nothing, according to this reasoning, could be inferred from it to direct our worship now; because they *saw him with their eyes*, and to us he is *unseen*. According to this, when blind Bartimeus said, *Jesus! thou son of David! have mercy on me;* he was guilty of idolatry; for he addressed an *unseen* Jesus; but when, having received his sight, *he followed Jesus in the way*,† and praised him, he ceased to be an idolater; and had he been stoned in the exercise, he would have been a *blessed martyr*. St. Peter spoke more to the purpose, when he said to those strangers, who had never been blessed with a sight of Christ; *whom having*

* Apology, pages 120. 129. edit. 2d. † Mark x.

*not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.**

The reverend Mr. Jebb thinks, "that the addresses of christians may with the same propriety be directed to the virgin Mary, as to the person of our Lord."† I hope this ingenious friend of learning and candour will reconsider this matter. Should he see reason to change his mind, he would, I am sure, ingenuously and zealously propagate the faith, which now, alas! he endeavours to destroy. Let us then contrast a devotee of the virgin Mary, with a worshipper of Jesus Christ.

David composed a psalm, in which he said, *into thine hand, I commit my spirit*, O LORD GOD OF TRUTH. St. Stephen invoked Jesus Christ at his death, and said, LORD JESUS *receive my spirit.*‡ Cardinal Bonaventure, who composed *our lady's Psalter*, that is to say, who converted all the addresses to God in the book of psalms into invocations of the virgin Mary, by changing the word *Lord*, or *Jehovah*, into *Lady*, said, *into thine hand I commit my spirit*, O LADY.§ David, Stephen, and the Cardinal, put up the same address; but they directed it to different objects. Of the propriety of David's address, there is no doubt. He deposited his life in the hand of Jehovah; *returned his spirit to* GOD, WHO GAVE IT; ‖ agreeably to the received doctrine of his church. But the question is, who, Stephen or the Cardinal, acted

* 1 Pet. i. 8. † Reasons for resignation, p. 3. edit. 3. ‡ Acts vii. 59
§ Psa. xxxi. 5. ‖ Eccl. xii. 7.

with the greatest *propriety:* the former in performing the same devotional act to Jesus Christ; or the latter in performing it to the virgin Mary? We will not judge in our own cause. Let us suppose a thoughtful Jew present at Stephen's death, and hearing him utter these words, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* He would instantly recollect, that he had heard something like the words before, and he would soon find that the dying man took them from the thirty-first psalm. His natural train of thought, then, would be this. "David com-"mitted his spirit to JEHOVAH. This enthusiast "committed his to Jesus. Did he take Jesus and "Jehovah for THE SAME? David deposited his "soul in the hands of the GOD OF TRUTH. Ste-"phen his in the hands of JESUS. He certainly "took Jesus of Nazareth for the God of truth! "David committed his spirit to God, because God "had REDEEMED him from many evils in the "course of his providence; and because God had "promised to redeem him from the power of the "grave. Did this man take Jesus of Nazareth "for the REDEEMER of Israel? The government "of both worlds, the disposal of providence in this "life, the distribution of rewards in the next; are "these in the hands of Jesus? What could he "have said more of *the* MOST HIGH GOD, *the pos-*"*sessor of heaven and earth?** Is not *the spirit in* "*man* THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY?† "*He, who stretched out the heavens, and laid the* "*foundations of the earth, did not he form the*

* Gen. xiv. 9. † Job xxxii. 8.

" *spirit of man within him?* * While it remains " in the body, is it not *the candle* OF JEHOVAH?† " When it returns, doth it not *return* TO GOD *who* " *gave it?*‡ *The soul of every living thing, the* " *breath of all mankind,* are they not in JEHOVAH'S " HAND?§ The dying blasphemer, like the idola- " trous Belshazzar, *knew these things, lifted up* " *himself against the Lord of heaven; and the* " *God in whose hand his breath was, and all his* " *ways, he hath not glorified.*‖ He was accused " of *speaking blasphemous words against Moses,* " *and against God.*¶ He was guilty; he died with " that confidence in a creature, which he ought " to have placed in God alone. *Cursed is the* " *man, that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his* " *arm.*"* If Jesus Christ be God, Stephen acted with propriety: if not, the same reasons, that keep us from addressing him, ought to have operated on Stephen; yea, he was more obliged to refrain by his circumstances; he was under a charge of blasphemy, and he ought to have used more than ordinary caution, lest his adversaries should have obtained a shadow of an argument against him. People, who have been unjustly put to death for pretended treasonable practices, have always taken care to pray aloud for the reigning prince just before their execution. The propriety of their conduct is obvious. But here is an unaccountable case. A man accused of blasphemy, denying the charge, asserting in his defence the honours of the

* Zech. xii. 1. † Prov. xx. 27. ‡ Eccl. xii. 7. § Job xii. 10.
‖ Dan. v. 22, 23. ¶ Acts vi. 11. * Jer. xvii. 5.

true God, turning the accusation against his judges, charging their ancestors with guilt for worshipping the host of heaven, and yet invoking Jesus, a mere man, in language which he, his judges, his executioners, and the whole nation, had always appropriated to Almighty God! The *propriety* of Stephen's conduct depends on his faith in the deity of Christ.

Let us attend to Cardinal Bonaventure. He invokes in his dying moments, suppose, the virgin Mary, and says, *Into thine hands, O Lady! I commit my spirit.* A protestant asks, *Who hath required this at your hands?** David resigned his soul into the hands of the TRUE GOD. Jesus Christ adopted David's words, and commended his spirit into the hands of his Father.† St. Stephen committed his into the hands of JESUS. According to my system, Jesus, the Father, and the true God, ARE ONE.‡ The terms of invocation differ, the object is the same, each invocation is therefore proper. But, granting for a moment, that Jesus is a mere man, I have, at least, in Stephen's invocation of him, a precedent for committing my soul to him; but where is your's for invoking Mary? Who will pretend to say, there is the same propriety in both? Is it as proper to act without a precedent, as with one? And are Jesus Christ's titles to adoration equally as spurious as those of Mary? Surely, the probability is stronger in my favour when I invoke him, whom all

* Isa. i. 12. † Luke xxiii. 46. ‡ John x. 30.

the angels are commanded to worship, than when I invoke her, in whose favour no such command can be produced. St. Stephen, *the blessed martyr*, is surely a safer guide, than a superstitious Cardinal of the church of Rome.

The word *worship*, my brethren, is used in scripture in two senses. It is sometimes put for *civil* respect; and sometimes for *religious* homage. In the first sense Abraham *worshipped* the sons of Heth;* and Nebuchadnezzar *worshipped* Daniel, that is to say, *he made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts*, declaring at the same time that Daniel's *God was* GOD OF GODS.† This sense of the word is yet retained in the office for the solemnizing of marriage.‡ But in its second meaning it is inapplicable to every creature, and belongs to God alone. The ideas of *supreme* and *subordinate* religious worship are unknown to the holy scripture. *Thou shalt* WORSHIP THE LORD THY GOD, *and* HIM ONLY *shalt thou serve*, is a law of all ages, and belongs to christians as well as to Jews.

Let us suppose *Timon*, a deacon of the christian congregation at Jerusalem, just returned from the stoning of Stephen, falling into the following conversation with *Caleb*, a christian, who had continued in the city, and had only heard a confused account of the martyr's death.

*Caleb.* Is Stephen really dead?

* Gen. xxxiii. 7. 12. †Dan. ii. 46. 47. 48.
‡ "With my body I thee WORSHIP."

*Timon.* He is. I saw him *fall asleep;** and, before sun-set, the sorrowful brotherhood intend to bury him.†

*C.* Did you hear his trial?

*T.* I was in court, and heard as much as could be expected in a place of such uncommon tumult and noise.

*C.* Who were his accusers?

*T.* We have, you know, in this city several colleges, where the sons of those Jews, who live in Asia, Egypt, Greece, and Italy, are sent to be educated. Either the masters, or the students, of *four* of these houses, pretended some time ago to confute our doctrine, and to that end *disputed* with Stephen.‡ Unable to resist the force of his reasoning, they hit on the abominable method of rendering him odious to government, and procured men to accuse him of *blasphemy*.§ These accusers deposed against him.

*C.* The cause was tried then in the ecclesiastical court.

*T.* It was. The Sanhedrim sat, and the high-priest was judge.‖

*C.* The cause certainly belonged to that court: but, as the law of blasphemy adjudges the blasphemer to be stoned to death;¶ and as the Romans have deprived all our courts of the power of putting a subject to death; the whole business of

* Acts vii. 60. † viii. 2. ‡ vi 9. § vi. 9, 10, 11. ‖ vi. 12. vii. 1. ¶ Lev. xxiv. 10—17.

the ecclesiastical court is to determine the nature of the crime. In order to do this the Sanhedrim can receive an accusation, arrest a subject, place him at the bar, receive the depositions of witnesses against him, give an opinion on the nature of the crime, and *declare* what punishment our law inflicts on the criminal. But the *infliction* of the punishment belongs to the temporal courts. This order was observed in the trial of our blessed Master.

*T.* Far from observing this order now, they had not patience to hear him out; they interrupted him in his defence; they behaved like madmen; the court declared him guilty of blasphemy; and the zealots affecting to fall in with the declaration, hurried him out of the city and stoned him to death, without any authority from the governor. Alas! had we been aware . . .

*C.* Aware of what, brother? Had we informed the governor of the tumult; had he resented their encroachment on his office; had he taken Stephen out of their hands, his interposition would have delayed his execution a day or two; but it would not have saved his life. The Sanhedrim have not the power of putting a subject to death; but they have the power of determining when he deserves to die; and the sordid scribes will take care so to explain the word blasphemy as to include the case under consideration, and to expose the accused to the penalty of a law, which he has not broken.

*T.* How do the scribes define blasphemy?

*C.* They include in the term a great many misdemeanors, which have no relation, or a very distant one, to that action, which the statute describes by the word blasphemy, the punishment of which is lapidation. According to them, to speak disrespectfully of Moses, of the law, of the temple, of the city, is to be guilty of blasphemy. To do either of these, say they, is to insult God; for the temple is his sanctuary, the city is his holy place, Moses is his servant, and the law his will. Thus under the shew of a wise and scrupulous piety they abuse the word, and involve the innocent with the guilty, first in the crime, and last in the punishment of blasphemy.

*T.* How would you define that blasphemy, which Moses in the law condemns?

*C.* Blasphemy, in my opinion, is the speaking or writing of any thing knowingly and wilfully, which is injurious to the perfections of Jehovah. Three things, I think, are essential to the crime. 1. *God* must be the object. 2. The *words*, which are spoken or written, must be in their *nature*, and independently on consequences, that others may derive from them, injurious to the object, God. 3. The *subject*, or he who commits the crime, must commit it *knowing* it to be injurious to God, and *intending* to have it understood so. To this blasphemy, and, I believe, to no other, the statute belongs. The blasphemy of him, on whose account the law was made,* that of Pharaoh,†

* Lev. xxiv. 10. † Exod. v. 2. viii. 19. ix. 27.

and that of Rabshakeh* agree to this definition. What I have described I call REAL blasphemy; but there is a RELATIVE blasphemy, which proceeds from false opinions of religion. A good man may be guilty of this *ignorantly,* by propagating opinions, which tend to dishonour God; but the tendency of which he does not perceive. A good man may be guilty of this *constructively;* for if he speak freely against received errors, which the priests hold sacred, they will construe what he says into blasphemy.

*T.* Thus they dealt with Stephen. They accused him of speaking *blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*† In proof of which the witnesses deposed, that they heard him say, *Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place.*‡ This is a prophecy, but it is not blasphemy; our rulers should have examined the truth of this prediction.

*C.* They did not want information. But what followed in court?

*T.* The holy man, throwing the dispositions of his heart into the features of his face, made his defence. The noise and confusion of the court were so great that we could hear only parts of it, and so violent was the rage of his judges, that they would not suffer him to finish it. He intended to own, I thought, the prediction, and to deny the blasphemy of it. For these purposes he ran through the history of our nation, and shewed the design of God in instituting ceremonial usages.

* Isaiah xxxvi. † Acts vi. 11. ‡ vi. 14.

They were well adapted to prevent idolatry, to which the nation had been formerly addicted; and to represent those substantial benefits, which the Messiah was to procure. It was no blasphemy to say that, when they had answered the end of their institution, they were to be abolished. Perceiving they would not let him go through his defence, he taxed his judges with murdering Jesus Christ, and with violating the law. *When they heard these* charges *they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth: but he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the son of man standing on the right hand of God!*

*C.* Where was he when he exclaimed thus?

*T.* He was at the bar in the council-chamber in the temple, where the sanhedrim sit to hear causes; *the place* against which, his accusers said, *he had spoken blasphemous words.** This exclamation broke up the court in the utmost confusion, some *cried out with a loud voice,* Blasphemy! Blasphemy! others *stopped their ears,* and the zealots *rushing on him with one accord,* led him from the temple, and *out of the city* to his execution.† They stoned him without the gate on the east side of the city, on the steep descent towards the vale of Jehoshaphat.‡

*C.* You followed, I presume; did you get near enough to hear any of his last words?

* Acts vi. 13, 14. † vii. 57, 58.

‡ Pocock's description of the East, vol. ii. chap. 6.

*T.* I saw him kneel down, and I heard him address two prayers to Jesus Christ; one for himself, the other for his enemies. The first was, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit;* and the last, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* He *fell asleep* as soon as he had uttered the last of these ejaculations.

*C.* Did our compassionate master appear to him again at the place of execution, as he had appeared to him in the hall?

*T.* I heard nothing of such an appearance.*

*C.* His death very much resembled that of our Saviour. His two last prayers were evidently taken from the lips of our departing Lord. You remember one of his petitions was, *Father! forgive them:* and another, *Father! into thy hands I commend my spirit.*† The forgiving of sins, and the beatifying of a departing soul, are works of Jehovah; to him Jesus Christ applied for both; and Stephen by applying to Jesus for both these blessings, has proved, that, in his opinion, Jesus and Jehovah are one.

*T.* The murderers of Stephen, then, will continue to think, that he was guilty of blasphemy?

*C.* Undoubtedly. They will say, God is an *all-sufficient* being.‡ His allsufficiency is the ground on which our scriptures claim religious worship for him.§ The invocation of others implies an in-

* Timon had not read a late Apology, which says, "Stephen saw "Jesus, when he prayed to him."

† Luke xxiii. 34. 46. ‡ Gen. xvii. 1. § Psa. xcv. xcvii. Isa. xl. &c.

sufficiency in God.* The forgiveness of sin is one of his most glorious works.† The receiving of a departing soul is another.‡ Prayer is called *sacrifice.*§ And the law says, *He that sacrificeth unto any other God, save unto* JEHOVAH ONLY, *he shall be utterly destroyed.*‖ Thus will the good man's character lie under a charge of *constructive* blasphemy. Had Stephen taken Jesus Christ, as some of our countrymen take him, for a *good man* only,¶ he would have been guilty of RELATIVE blasphemy by invoking him, for he would have given a sanction to a practice, which evidently tends to dishonour God, by diverting some of the noblest acts of the mind from him, and by fixing them on a creature, contrary to his express command, THOU SHALL WORSHIP NO OTHER GOD: FOR JEHOVAH, WHOSE NAME IS JEALOUS, IS A JEALOUS GOD.* The lapidation of Stephen, however, cannot be justified in either of these cases; for the law relates only to REAL blasphemy, as I said before.

I leave the application of the truths, which, for variety-sake, I have thrown into a dialogue form, and pass to another evidence of Christ's divinity.

VI. *Observe,* my brethren, *the application of old testament passages which belong to Jehovah, to Jesus Christ in the new testament, and try whether you can acquit the writers of the new tes-*

* 2 Kings i. 3. † Dan. ix. 9. Exod. xxxiv. 7. Luke vii. 49. ‡ Psa. xxxi. 5. § Psa. cxli. 2. cxvi. 17. ‖ Exod. xxii. 20. ¶ John vii. 12. * Exod. xxxiv. 14.

*tament of misrepresentation, on supposition that Jesus is not God.* This observation does not so much regard the force of the terms; as the wisdom and equity of those, who apply them. In men, who pretend to inspiration, we have a right to look for the utmost precision. What should we have thought of Peter, if he had claimed the crown of Judea from the reigning prince, and had said in support of his claim, It is written, DAVID'S *seed shall endure for ever, and* HIS *throne as the sun before me?** And what then? it would have been said, What have you to do with what is predicted of another person? Let us apply this to the subject in hand. St. Paul says *We shall all stand before the judgment seat of* CHRIST. That we shall all be judged, we allow. But how do you prove that *Christ* shall be our judge? *Because,* adds the Apostle, *As I live, saith* THE LORD, *every knee shall bow to* ME, *and every tongue shall confess to* GOD.† What sort of reasoning is this? How does this apply to Christ if Christ be not God? and how dare a man quote one of the most guarded passages in the old testament for such a purpose? The passage is this. *There is* NO GOD ELSE BESIDE ME. *A just God and a Saviour, there is* NONE BESIDE ME. *I am God, and* THERE IS NONE ELSE. *Unto* ME *every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*‡ The Apostle's reasoning is this. Jehovah says, every knee shall bow to him. Jesus is Jehovah. Therefore every knee shall bow to Jesus.

* Psa. lxxxix. 20. 36. † Rom. xiv. 10, 11. ‡ Isa. xlv. 20, &c.

*John the Baptist · · is he, who was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, Prepare ye the way.** Isaiah saith, *Prepare the way of* THE LORD, *make straight a highway for* OUR GOD. *Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold* YOUR GOD. *Behold, the* LORD GOD *will come, and feed his flock like a shepherd.*† But what has John the Baptist to do with all this description, if Jesus Christ be only a *messenger*, of Jehovah, and not Jehovah himself; for Isaiah saith, Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH?

A prophet, speaking in the name of God, says, *The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall look upon* ME, *whom they pierced.*‡ An evangelist says, *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced the side of Jesus, and the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*§

A prophet says, *I saw the* LORD *sitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. And Seraphims cried one to another,* HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD OF HOSTS, *the whole earth is full of* HIS *glory.*‖ An evangelist saith, *These things said Esaias, when he saw* HIS *glory, and spake of* HIM; that is of Jesus.¶

A prophet says, *The* LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF *shall be for a stone of stumbling.** An Apostle says, Christ is that *stone of stumbling.*†

It would be endless to enumerate all the passages, which are thus applied to Jesus Christ. Allow Jesus Christ to be God, and all these applications

* Matt. iii. 1. 3. † Isa. xl. 3, 9, 10, 11. ‡ Zech. xii. 10. § John xix. 34, 36, 37. ‖ Isa. vi. 1, 2, 3. ¶ John xii. 39. * Isa. viii, 13, 14 † 1 Peter ii. 8.

are proper. If we deny it, the new testament, we must own, is one of the most unaccountable compositions in the world, calculated to make easy things hard to be understood.

Let us take a single passage of the old testament, and let us see what the application of it to Jesus Christ proves. John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus Christ to ask him, Whether he were the expected Messiah? The messengers find him in a crowd of diseased people. To one, who had been blind, he gives sight. To another, who had been deaf, he gives hearing. He cleanseth lepers, and makes the lame walk. Having healed the infirmities of their bodies, he addresseth himself to the disorders of their minds, and speaks with an authority unknown to the scribes. By the gracefulness of his deportment, he obtains the attention of his hearers. By the truth of his doctrine, he obtains the assent of their minds. By cloathing his ideas with images, the archetypes of which had produced pleasure and pain in his hearers, he obtains an authority over their hearts, and excites, as he pleases, the hopes, the fears, the joys, the sorrows, of his audience. Having opened these grand springs of human action, he gives plain and profitable rules of conduct for the producing and promoting of social happiness. John's messengers took the first opportunity of delivering their message. *John Baptist*, say they, *hath sent us to thee, saying, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what*

*things ye have* SEEN *and* HEARD, *how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* John's disciples returned to the prison, tell their master what miracles they had seen, and what doctrines they had heard, adding that Jesus Christ had not made a direct reply to their question; but had put the proof of his Messiahship on his causing the blind to see, the lame to walk, and so on; and on the plainness of his doctrine to the lowest of mankind. This is the fact. Let us hear John and his two disciples, whom we will venture to name Reuben and Othniel, and let us see what they can make of this fact.

*Reuben.* We do not well comprehend the meaning of Jesus.

*John.* I understand him thoroughly: He meant, Read what the prophets predict of the Messiah; compare my ministry with their predictions; and if my history exactly answer their prophecies, you may fairly infer, that I am the Messiah, so often promised, and so eagerly expected.

*Othniel.* The prophecies are very numerous, master! to which of them did he refer us?

*J.* To the thirty-fifth section of the prophecy of Isaiah, where miraculous works and simplicity of doctrine are said to characterise the Messiah's ministry, and these are the two evidences of his mission which he gave you; *The blind see—the poor*

*understand good tidings.* Take the parchment, and read the section.

R. *The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it; the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of Jehovah and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them, that are of fearful heart, be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion....*

*J.* Stop, read the last line again.

R. *The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

*J.* FOOLS SHALL NOT ERR THEREIN: that is to say, *The way of holiness* shall be rendered so plain

by the doctrine of the Messiah, that *the most illiterate* of mankind shall not be liable *to err therein.* To this prophecy Jesus referred you, when he said, *The poor have the gospel preached unto them.* This excellent method of teaching, and the miraculous recovery of *sight to the blind,* and of *health to the diseased,* were to take place at the same time, and to be introduced by the same person, and the person, who introduceth both these, is the promised Messiah.

*O.* We saw Jesus perform miracles; and we heard him speak as never man spake; and the prophet, we see, describes these actions, as proofs of the identity of the Messiah; but Rabbi! the prophet does not ascribe these events to *man,* he says, GOD *will come; Behold!* YOUR GOD *will come;* HE *will come and save you;* and he calls the whole combination of events a display of THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *the excellency of* OUR GOD. What has Jesus of Nazareth to do with the incommunicable name of the blessed God?

*J.* The Messiah is sometimes spoken of in our prophecies as *Jehovah,* and sometimes he is called Jehovah's *servant.* Sometimes the noblest works are ascribed to him, and sometimes the greatest sufferings. Our wise men, whose *eyes are darkened,* and whose *table is become a snare,* so that *what should have been for their welfare is become a trap,** have imagined two Messiahs, the one an exalted, the other a debased person: but the truth is, The Messiah is one extraordinary person, in

* Psal. lxix. 22, 23.

whom two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man, are united. What is affirmed of him in one view cannot be said of him in another. The idea of the person of the Messiah is a key to the prophecies. Without using it you will never be able to satisfy yourselves.

*R.* Is Jesus Lord then as well as Christ?

*J.* Our family have always thought so. My father taught me to believe myself *a prophet of* THE HIGHEST, because I was to *go before the face of* THE LORD *to prepare his way;* and he took his notion of the *Lord*, before whom I had the honour to go, from this prophet, who calls the person, before whom I go, JEHOVAH OUR GOD.*

*R.* I have been told, that when the late King enquired of the scribes where the Messiah should be born, they told him at Bethlehem-Judah.† Now the same prophet, who fixes the *place* of his birth, fixes also the *rank* of him, who was to be born; the *ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, is to be born in Bethlehem-Judah.*‡ I confess this passage was incomprehensible to me. I could not conceive how a child born at Bethlehem could cause *emanations* of his excellency *from the days of eternity.*

*J.* There are many prophecies of this kind, and to our puerile and depraved minds they may appear inconsistent, and even *scandalous.* Do you think Jesus said in vain, *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me?*

* Isa. xl. 3. Luke iii. 4. † Matt. ii. 4. ‡ Micah v. 2.

*R.* God forbid, Rabbi! that we should form our judgments of natural dignity, or of moral excellency, by exterior appearances according to the false maxims of the world. You have taught us, that the same wisdom which buried gold and diamonds in dark subterranean caverns of rock, and earth, generally throws a vail of meanness over real majesty, at once creating a field to exercise human industry, and a crown to reward it. Were we to renounce this principle, we should reverence Herod, the cruellest of tyrants, on the throne, and forsake you, the best of masters, in the prison.

*J.* Apply this principle to the prophecy of Micah. *The* GOINGS FORTH *of him, who shall* COME FORTH *out of Bethlehem, have been from of old, from everlasting;* that is to say in plain popular style, He, who shall be born at Bethlehem, appeared often to our fathers in the earlier ages of the world.

*O.* Will you explain yourself, master?

*J.* I will. But as I am going to reason from *three* facts, take care you do not draw your conclusion from either of them separately; my conclusion ariseth from the union of the three. Is God, think you, invisible?

*O.* Undoubtedly he is. You have informed us that *no man* HATH *seen God at any time,** and Moses hath taught us, that *no man* CAN *see God.*† We venerate these testimonies the more, because we know, they are conformable to the dictates of right reason.

* John i, 15. † Exod. xxxiii.

*J.* This is one fact. The first great cause, the infinite spirit, whom we call Jehovah, is invisible to every material eye. Let us proceed to the second. Did Jehovah appear to our fathers?

*R.* Some being in the form of an angel, or of a man, who called himself Jehovah, often appeared to our ancestors, especially in the earlier ages of the world.

*J.* If the man, or the messenger, who appeared to our fathers called himself Jehovah, certainly he was Jehovah. The great design of our religion is to distinguish the one living and true God from every other being. For this purpose God taught Moses to call him by a particular NAME, and said, THIS *is my memorial unto all generations.** A promiscuous use of names always produceth a confusion of ideas in regard to the objects, to which the names are given; and had not Moses maintained a chaste precision of style in his writings, this law would have defeated its own design. Beside, he, who appeared to our fathers, suffered himself to be worshipped, and not only took the names and titles of Jehovah, but also promised and threatened, blessed and chastised in his own right; whence I infer that he, who appeared of old, was Jehovah, rendering himself visible and accessible to creatures by the borrowed form of a man. Was you at the synagogue last sabbath day?

*R.* I was.

* Exod. iii. 15.

*J.* Do you remember what section of the law Rabbi Samuel read?

*R.* He read that section, which describes the mission of Moses.* I took particular notice of it.

*J.* You did well. The mission of Moses is the most important article in the history of our nation. He undoubtedly related it with the utmost precision. But let us hear the man of God. THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH *appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush* · · · · *and Jehovah said, draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground* · · · · I AM THE GOD OF THY FATHER, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB · · · · *Say unto the children of Israel,* I AM, JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD of ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, THE GOD OF JACOB, *hath sent me unto you: this is* MY NAME *for ever, and this is* MY MEMORIAL *unto all generations. Go, and* I *will be with thee; have not* I JEHOVAH *made the dumb, the deaf, the seeing, and the blind?* Is it not plain, that he, who sent Moses, was Jehovah?

*R.* What say the scribes, master?

*J.* What they say is of very little consequence, for ever since they have left off to take heed to the Lord, and have given themselves up to the enthusiasm of Bath Kol, they have answered the

* Exod. iii, 4.

prophet's description: *they see indeed, but perceive not.** Some of them pretend, that a created angel held this conversation with Moses, and spoke in the name of God, because he was a messenger of God. But they wrest the scriptures. Moses was a messenger of God to our fathers; but would our fathers have *bowed their heads and worshipped*, if Moses had said I *am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob; draw not nigh to* ME; *put off your shoes;* and so on? The language of Moses and the prophets is, THUS SAITH THE LORD.

*O.* We allow then the second fact. He, who appeared to our fathers, was Jehovah.

*J.* If I rest the evidence of this fact on this section, I do it only for the sake of drawing the subject into a narrow compass; for I could argue from the appearance to Hagar;† from that to Abraham, to whom Jehovah appeared in human form, accompanied by *two* other *men*,‡ afterwards called *angels*;§ to him our father prayed for Sodom after the two other appearances were gone to inform Lot‖ of the destruction of that city; and him he called THE JUDGE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. The history of Jacob alone affords sufficient proof. The *angel*, who spoke to Jacob in a dream, called himself THE GOD OF BETHEL;¶ and the *man* with whom *Jacob wrestled*, and to whom *he made supplication*, is called JEHOVAH, THE LORD GOD

* Isa. vi. 9. † Gen. xvi. ‡ Gen. xviii. 1, 2. § Gen. xix. 1. ‖ Gen. xviii. 22. ¶ Gen. xxxi. 11. 13. xxviii. 13, &c.

OF HOSTS.* There are many more appearances recorded in the same manner. Either he, who appeared, was the true God, or Moses has confounded the creature with the Creator in a manner very dangerous to the honour of the blessed God. God may, and in the nature of things God must assume a form to render himself visible to mortals. If that form be human, the beholders will naturally say a *man* appeared; but neither men, nor angels, may assume the incommunicable names and titles of God; nor may they suffer themselves to be worshipped; nor may they bless in their own names. Three times Jacob called him, who appeared to him, an angel; once he called him a man; and above thirty times he gave him the titles, Jehovah, God. The invisible God did appear to our fathers then, in *human* form.

*R.* Did he not also appear in *angelic* form, Rabbi?

*J.* There is a class of beings, which we call angels, a *little higher* than mankind:† but the word angel is not descriptive of the *nature*, much less of any supposed *form* of these spirits; they are Jehovah's messengers; we know no more of them; and when they have rendered themselves visible they have assumed a human form. The idea of God manifesting himself to men in the person of a man, is an idea that runs through all the history, and all the prophecies of our scriptures. This *man* is stiled Jehovah's *fellow*,‡ and

* Gen. xxxii. 24. Hosea xii. 4. 5. † Psal. viii. 5. ‡ Zech. xiii. 7.

the third fact, which I propose to your consideration, is that, which the prophet Micah mentions.

*R.* The three facts then are these. God is an invisible spirit. God, the invisible spirit, assumed an human form, and in it appeared to our fathers, in the early ages of the world. He, who assumed the form of a man in the early ages of the world in appearing to our fathers, actually became a man, and was born at Bethlehem-Judah.

*J.* These are the three facts; the inference is easy. Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem, existed before his birth, appeared to our fathers, and was worshipped by them as Jehovah, the Lord their God. I have, to the priests, and to the populace, repeatedly preferred him before myself, because *he was before me.** I die contented, because in so doing, according to Gabriel's prediction to my father, I have *turned many of the children of Israel* TO THE LORD THEIR GOD.†

*O.* We are then to conclude from the prophecy of Micah, and from the prophecy of Isaiah, to which Jesus referred us, that he is God-man, the promised Messiah.

J. For my part I have such confidence in the God of truth, who can have no interest in deceiving us, and whose perfect wisdom renders it impossible for him to want proper words to express his meaning, that one word of his is sufficient to determine my mind on any subject. From the section in the prophet, and from the conduct of

* John i. 15. 27. 30. † Luke i. 16. This passage, Dr. Clarke allows, belongs to Jesus Christ.

Jesus, I reason thus. Isaiah speaks of works to be performed at the coming of JEHOVAH THE GOD OF ISRAEL. JESUS comes, performs the works, and claims the titles of which the prophet speaks. If there be therefore any fixed meaning in words, any credit to be given to Jesus, JESUS, is JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL. I am not *offended. He cometh from heaven, he is above all, and he who receiveth his testimony, sets to his seal, that God is true.**

Here I break off this supposed dialogue, my brethren; but I cannot dismiss this article, without remarking one passage more, the quotation of which would give me the most contemptible idea of the writer's abilities, did I not believe that he took Jesus Christ to be God. On the contrary, if he meant to prove the deity of Jesus Christ, I admire his wisdom, for the passage invincibly proves the point. This writer is St. Paul. St. Paul, in the first of Hebrews, elevates Christ above the whole creation, and requires all the angels to adore him. We ask, by what authority do you require the celestial spirits to adore a man? Because, replies he, God *saith, let all the angels of God worship* HIM. We answer, there is no such passage in the genuine scriptures. There is, indeed, a passage in the ninety-seventh psalm, which saith, *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship* JEHOVAH *all ye gods,* or *angels.* But

* John iii. 31, 33.

how does a command to worship JEHOVAH apply to the worship of JESUS? If Jesus and Jehovah be not the same, art thou not the least and last of all pretenders to reason?

Let us hear the psalmist. THE LORD *reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitudes of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about* HIM: *righteousness and judgment are the habitation of* HIS *throne. A fire goeth before* HIM, *and burneth up* HIS *enemies round about.* HIS *lightnings enlightned the world: the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of* JEHOVAH: *at the presence of* THE LORD OF THE WHOLE EARTH. *The heavens declare* HIS *righteousness: and all the people see* HIS *glory. Confounded be all they, that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols;* WORSHIP HIM ALL YE GODS. The natural impressions which these passages make on the reader, are these. The psalmist describes the SUPREME GOD, and commands the angels to worship HIM. St. Paul quotes the psalm, applies it to JESUS, and commands the angels to worship HIM. JESUS is therefore, in St. Paul's account, GOD SUPREME.

VII. *Examine, whether events have justified that notion of Christianity, which the prophets gave their countrymen of it, if Jesus Christ be not God.* The coming of the Messiah was foretold by the prophets. The calling of the gentiles from the worship of idols to the worship of the one living and true God, is one event, which, the prophets said, the coming of the Messiah should bring

to pass. If Jesus Christ be God, the event answers the prophecy; if not, the event is not come to pass, for Christians in general worship Jesus, which is idolatry, if he be not God.

The second, third, and fourth chapters of Isaiah are one continued discourse. The first five verses foretell the advent of the Messiah, and the call of the gentiles. From the sixth verse to the end of the third chapter, the rejection of the Jews, and the destruction of idolatry are foretold. And the fourth chapter is a consolatory close to the discourse, addressed to the pious Jews. The destruction of idolatry, in the second part, is thus expressed. *The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon* ATL THE HILLS, *that are lifted up, and upon* ALL PLEASANT PICTURES. THE LORD ALONE *shall be exalted in that day. And* THE IDOLS *he shall utterly abolish.* The prophet calls this *walking in the light of the Lord;* and St. Paul adopts the style, and says to the Ephesians, who had been idolaters, *Ye were sometimes darkness; but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.** The prophet Isaiah was not singular in his notion. Another prophet says, JEHOVAH *will famish all the gods of the earth, and men shall* WORSHIP HIM, *every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.*† Another says, THE LORD *shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be* ONE LORD AND HIS NAME ONE.‡ A fourth adds, *From the rising of the sun even unto*

* Eph. v. 8. † Zeph. ii. 11. ‡ Zech. xiv. 9.

*the going down of the same,* MY NAME *shall be great among the gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto* MY NAME, *and a pure offering: for* MY NAME SHALL BE GREAT AMONG THE HEATHEN, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.* The prophets then intended to make their countrymen understand, that the advent of the Messiah would be fatal to idolatry by establishing the pure worship of one living and true God. Let us see whether events justify this prediction.

The Reverend Mr. Lindsey affirms, that "all christian people, for upwards of three hundred years after Christ, were generally Unitarians, what is now called either Arian or Socinian."† Mr. Lindsey is not singular in his opinion. Some eminent men in the church of Rome, and some learned divines in the protestant churches, both at home and abroad, have maintained the same opinion. On the other hand, divines equally learned, and equally credible, have maintained the opposite opinion; and this last class, I think, have embraced that side, which has fewest difficulties in it, and the best arguments to support it. It would be unfair, my fellow christians, to engage you in a question, which must receive its answer from records, that are inaccessible to most of you. The decision, too, very little concerns you; for the rule of your faith is not the uncertain style of the fathers, but the *sure word* of God. You have been taught to answer all questions of this kind with that well

* Mal. i. 11 †Apol. p. 24. edit. 2d.

known saying of a great man; THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.

Our present argument does not enter into this question. We only affirm, what neither side will deny, that let the *belief* of the primitive christians be what it would, their *practice* was to WORSHIP JESUS CHRIST. However they describe his nature in their creeds, *worship him* they certainly did.

In proof of this I will adduce three unsuspected witnesses, who, having no share in our dispute, can have no kind of interest in deceiving us. The works of the two first you have in English; and ask any one, who is capable of answering, whether I impose on you in the last. Our first witness is Pliny. Pliny was appointed governor of the province of Bithynia by the emperor Trajan, in the year one hundred and three. There were christians in that province in St. Peter's time, and he wrote his epistles to them.* Pliny examined, and punished several christians for their nonconformity to the established religion of the empire. In a letter to the emperor, giving an account of his conduct he declares, *they affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a certain stated day before it was light, and* ADDRESSED THEMSELVES IN A FORM OF PRAYER TO CHRIST, AS TO SOME GOD. &c.† The latin of the latter part of this sentence Dr. Watts has put in the title page of your hymn-books; and probably the Dr. would have rendered the words, *they*

* 1 Pet i. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 1. † Pliny's Epistles, book x. epist. 97.

*sang hymns to Christ as to a God.* Both come to the same. Pliny meant to inform the emperor, that christians WORSHIPED Christ.

The established church has inserted one of the ancient prayers in the liturgy. It is intitled, *A prayer of St. Chrysostom,* and runs thus. "ALMIGHTY GOD, ····who dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in THY name ····fulfill now, O LORD, the desires and PETITIONS of thy servants."* The reverend Mr. Lindsey changes *thy name* into *thy* SON*'s name.*† We do not dispute now the propriety of this alteration. We affirm an historical fact. The primitive christians *worshipped Christ.*

Our second witness is Mohammed. This Arabian imposter lived in the sixth century. (We will return to earlier evidence presently. This, as we shall see by and by, belongs to the question.) In speaking of Christians, he says, *They are infidels, who say, Verily God is Christ, the son of Mary.*‡ *Christians say, Christ is the Son of God: may God resist them! They are commanded to worship one God only; though the* IDOLATERS *be averse thereto* §. In the light of infidels and idolaters he considers christians throughout the Koran; and, indeed, had not christians worshipped Christ, he could have had no shadow of a pretence to reform their religion, and to bring them back to the worship of one God.

* Litany. † Apol. p. 186. ‡ Sale's Koran, chap. v. entitled, The Table. § Chap. ix. entitled, The Declaration of Immunity.

Our third witness is Justin Martyr. Justin had been a heathen philosopher, and, after his conversion to christianity, he published two apologies for christianity, which he addressed to the reigning emperors, in order to dissuade them from persecuting christians. These apologies are some of the most valuable remains of antiquity. The apologist describes the doctrine, the worship, and the conversation of the christians of his time. *The pagans,* says he, *tax us with atheism; and if by atheism they mean a refusal of worshiping heathen deities, we own we are atheists: but, if by atheism they mean a refusal of worshipping any God, we disown the charge. The true God, the Father*·····THE SON·····*and the Spirit* WE WORSHIP, AND ADORE, &c.* Christians in Justin's time, that is, about one hundred and fifty years after Christ, worshipped Jesus Christ.

That the far greater part of christians have continued to worship Jesus will not be doubted. The worshippers of the Son of God are not so hard driven to make out a succession as to be obliged to insert the name of *Peter Abelard* of amorous memory. That Abelard, who could with equal facility explain Ezekiel's prophecies, and compose amorous sonnets for Heloise; that Abelard who was equally free to unfold the doctrine of the Trinity, and ruin the peace of a family, by debauching his patron's niece; that Abelard is put into a list of unitarians by a gentleman of unspotted mo-

* Apol. ii.

rality, *in whose eyes a vile person is abhorred.* A proof of the scarcity of unitarians, and consequently of the general homage, that christians have paid to Jesus Christ.*

If Jesus Christ be a mere man, the adoration of him is idolatry. Idolatry is either, 1. The worshipping the true God by a material symbol, or representation; or, 2. The worshipping of creatures, either by forsaking the true God, and serving others only; or by worshipping others together with him. If therefore the bulk of christians have worshipped Jesus, and if Jesus be a mere man only, the generality of christians have fallen into idolatry.

We affirm nothing more in this article than what our opponents allow.

The design of Mr. Firmin was to regain christians to the worship of one God, and the principles on which he went are thus expressed. "1. The "great design and scope of BOTH testaments, and "the REASON that they were given by God, was "to regain mankind to the belief and acknow- "ledgement of BUT ONE GOD; to destroy polythe- "ism OF ALL SORTS····2. The WHOLE CHRISTI- "AN CHURCH IS HEATHEN already in the majo- "rity of its members."† The first of these facts is allowed on both sides, and the last cannot be denied if Jesus Christ be a mere man. But the si-

* Rev. Mr. Lindsey's Apology, p. 30. After all, Abelard was a trinitarian. See Abelard. Rem. M. in Bayle. The sincere apologist, I dare say, had not attended to Bayle's account of Abelard.

† Rev. Mr. Lindsey's Apology, p. 196, 197.

lence of both testaments on this horrid corruption of christianity, while the writers of both foretold other corruptions of little or no consequence compared with this, affords a strong presumption that the whole christian church has not injured the unity of God by worshipping Christ; and if our christianity be that, which the prophets foretold, it is certain, it hath, wherever it came, destroyed *polytheism of all sorts*, regained men to the belief of BUT ONE GOD, and the belief of Christ's divinity is not inconsistent with it.

If the apostles did not foresee this idolatrous worship of Jesus, God gave them a less degree of the spirit than he gave Moses; and then what become of all those passages in both testaments, which declare the MOST plentiful effusion to the apostles? If the apostles did foresee, and did not foretell, this dangerous departure from their doctrine, what become of all their fine professions of *declaring the* WHOLE COUNSEL *of God*, of *keeping back* NOTHING *that might be profitable*, of *imparting their* OWN SOULS, and so on? Are not all these rather romantic?

The writers of the new testament, who established a purity of faith and manners in the first churches, foresaw and foretold the corruptions of christianity. In regard to MORALS, they said men would become *unholy, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.** They said also, *in the latter times, some shall depart from* THE FAITH, *giving heed to the doctrine of* DE-

* 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c.

MONS.* Demons, according to the theology of the gentiles, were middle powers between the sovereign gods and mortal men. Of these demons there were accounted two kinds. One kind of demons were the souls of men deified or canonized after death. The other kinds of demons were such as had never been the souls of men, nor ever dwelt in mortal bodies. These latter demons may be parallelled with angels, as the former may with canonized saints.† St. Paul therefore foretold, that christianity should be corrupted with the worshipping of saints and angels. These events have come to pass, and they confirm the truth of the gospel, as the devils published of old the mission of Christ. But in what part of the holy scriptures can we find the least intimation of christians falling into idolatry by worshipping Christ? Those *scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation;* those scriptures, which were *given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;* those scriptures, which *make a man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works,*‡ would they have left us without warning on this dangerous topic? Why did not the founders of christianity, like the Jewish legislator, *call heaven and earth to record against* their successors, and warn them against worshipping A NEW GOD, THAT CAME NEWLY UP, *whom their fathers feared not.*§

* 1 Tim. iv. 1.

† See the present Right Rev. Bishop of Bristol's Dissertations on the Prophecies, Diss. xxiii. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 15. § Deut. xxxi. 24—29. xxxii. 15—25.

If the worshipping of Jesus Christ, under the sanction of revelation, be idolatry, whether that sanction be real or pretended, it is the most dangerous, because the most specious kind of idolatry, that ever appeared in the world; an idolatry, that has somehow or other originated in the oracles of God; an idolatry, that has interwoven itself with civil constitutions; an idolatry, that deludes the most upright of mankind; an idolatry, of longer standing than any other; an idolatry, therefore, the most likely to remain for ever. Is this the DAY which *Abraham saw*, and was GLAD?* Was it the approach of this LUMINARY, † that occasioned the rapturous flights of the prophets? Is this the *reigning of* JEHOVAH *before his ancients gloriously?* ‡ Is this the *making of new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth* RIGHTEOUSNESS? § Is the THRONE, from whence laws proceed, that *make all things new*, filled by an usurper? ‖ And is *the name, whereby* HE *shall be called* THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS? ¶ O thou immortal, invisible only wise God! rather than suffer thy glory to be thus obscured, cover the doating prophets with confusion! Perish christianity with all its gaudy splendor! Give us back Judaism! Return us Moses, who was *faithful in all thy house!*

If the gospel have destroyed idolatry; if it have secured the lives, the properties, the honours, the

* John viii. 56. † Mal. iv. 2. Luke i. 78. ‡ Isa. xxiv. 23.
§ Isa. lxv. 17. lxvi. 22. ‖ Rev. xxi. 5. ¶ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

civil and religious liberties of mankind; if it have illuminated the minds, purified the hearts, and saved the souls of millions of men; it deserves all the encomiums given it by the prophets. Where are the thirty thousand gods, that were worshipped in Greece in Elisha's time?* Are they not *cast to the bats and the moles?*† Where are the nineteen beasts in human shape, who were enslaved by every twentieth lord?‡ Who *opened their blind eyes* to their dignity, and brought these *prisoners out of the prison house?*§ *The Lord* Jesus *came forth as a mighty man; he stirred up jealousy like a man of war; he cried; yea roared; he prevailed against his enemies. He brought the blind by a way that they knew not, he made darkness light before them.*‖ Well may the *wilderness, the cities, the villages, the caves, give glory to Jehovah*-Jesus, *and declare his praise in the islands.*

If we allow, that Jesus Christ hath destroyed idolatry, although he is worshipped himself, the errors and vices of the christian world will appear few in comparison of those, which abounded in the heathen world; and, compared with the benefits derived from the gospel, they are only like spots in the sun.

VIII. *If Jesus Christ be not God, you will be obliged to allow, that Mohammed has written more clearly on the nature of Christ, than the apostles have, and that the Turks, who reject the*

* So Hesiod reckoned them, and he lived in Elisha's time. See Potter's Antiquities, vol. i. book ii. chap. i. † Isa ii. 20. ‡ Potter, vol. i. book i. chap. 10. § Isa. xlii. 7. ‖ Ibid. xlii. 13, 16, 11, 12.

*gospel, have clearer notions of the nature of Jesus Christ, than christians have, who receive and study it.*

| Inspired writers. | Mohammed. |
|---|---|
| *The word was* GOD.* | They are INFIDELS, who say, God is Christ.* |
| Jesus is THE BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY, *and* THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON.† | Christ the Son of Mary is no more than an APOSTLE.† |
| *He shall be called the* SON *of God.*‡ | Christians say Christ is the SON of God. How are they infatuated! Far be it from God that he should have a SON.‡ |
| *Jesus Christ is* LORD OF ALL.§ | Jesus is no other than a SERVANT.§ |

When Peter confessed, *thou art Christ, the Son of the living God; Jesus answered, upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** With much the same view St. Paul said, *the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth.* † To preserve this truth for ever in the church, Jesus Christ promised his disciples to be *with them alway even* UNTO THE AND OF THE WORLD.‡ *The spirit of* TRUTH, said

* John i. 1. † Heb. i. 3. ‡ Luke i. 35. § Acts x. 36.

* Sale's Koran, ch. v. The Table. † Ch. v. ‡ Ch. ix. the Declaration of Immunity. Ch. iv. Women. § Ch. xliii. Ornaments of Gold.

* Mat. xvi. 18. † 1 Tim. iii. 15. ‡ Mat. xxviii. 20.

he, *whom* THE WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE, *dwelleth with* YOU, *and shall be in you: he shall* ABIDE WITH YOU FOR EVER.* But, if the generality of christians believe the divinity of a mere man, they believe a lie, and the *spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,* has forsaken the christian church, and dwells in the mosques of a vile impostor.

It may be said, Mohammed taught the unity of God. The unity of God is truth, and if one truth dwell with an impostor, why may not another? We answer, the unity of God is discoverable by the light of nature; it is a truth of natural religion; but the doctrine of Christ's person is a truth of revelation. Of the truths of revelation Christ and his apostles speak. The generality of christians understand a truth of revelation in one sense. Mohammed and his followers understand it in a contrary sense. A high degree of probability is against the latter.

Lastly. *Consider what numberless passages of scripture have no sense, or a very absurd one, if Jesus Christ be a mere man.* To give a few instances. *Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.*† What a strange expression! It might as well be said, Paul was made of the seed of Benjamin *according to the flesh.* What would such a saying mean?

*Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.*‡ According to the princi-

* John xiv. 16, 17. † Rom. i. 3. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

ple, which we oppose, St. Paul says, *great is the mystery of godliness.* What? Why, God made a very wise man. A great mystery indeed!

*He, that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* * That is, he, that hath seen me, hath heard my doctrine.

*O Father! glorify me with thine own self, with the glory, which I had with thee before the world was.*† According to the notion which we oppose, our Saviour means, glorify me with the glory, which was decreed for me before the world was. As well might Paul have said, when he was shipwrecked, save us on boards and on broken pieces of the ship with that safety, which we had with thee before the world was.

*Jesus Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*‡ That is, say some, Jesus, not being God, thought not of the robbery of being equal with God. Glorious humility! A *creature* did not think of ranking himself with the creator! The humblest effort of the wisest human mind was only not to *equal* itself with Jehovah!

*The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand· · · · thou art a priest for ever.*§ That is, say some, *the Lord Jehovah said unto king David, thou art, of all the sons of men, my principal favourite, who hast free access to me.* In vain have learned men objected, David could not

* John xiv. 9. † John xvii. 5. ‡ Phil. ii. 6. § Psal. cx. 1. 4.

say of *himself*, the Lord said unto *my Lord;* nor did he *sit at the right hand* of God, exalted above men and angels; nor were all *his enemies subdued* under his feet; nor did they whom he conquered pay him a *willing* obedience; nor was he an *everlasting priest*, or an everlasting *king;* nor was his dominion *extensive* over the nations and the gentiles.* In vain, I say, have learned men objected these difficulties: the former is an improved sense, for it keeps most out of sight the idea of *worshipping David's Lord.* Consequences dangerous to favourite opinions might follow. One might inquire, *who* is David's Lord? David might reply, *my soul! thou hast said unto* JEHOVAH, THOU ART MY LORD;† and a third might urge, *David speaketh*, in the sixteenth psalm, *concerning* JESUS *of Nazareth;* ‡ *the* ROOT *of David; the bright, the morning star;* THE LORD GOD OF THE HORY PROPHETS, *who sent his angels to testify these things in the churches.*§

Take another example from the same psalm. *He*, Maxentius and his host—*shall drink*, shall be drowned—*of the brook*, in the river Tiber—*therefore shall he*—Constantine—*lift up his head*, triumph over Maxentius.‖ This is the exposition of that truly great man, Le Clerc:¶ but, take away his name, and what has it to recommend it? When Mr. Whiston applied a part of the Re-

* Ruarus, and some other socinians, propose and adopt this interpretation. See Dr. Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. iii. † Psal. xvi. 2. ‡ Acts ii. 25. § Rev. xxii. 6. 16.
‖ Psal. cx. 9. ¶ Jortin. Rem. vol. iii.

velation of St. John to prince Eugene's wars, and procured his calculations to be presented to the prince, the generous prince politely rewarded the author for his labour, protesting at the same time, he never knew till then, that he had the honour of being known to St. John. It is very questionable whether Constantine, and Maxentius, had the honour of being known to David.

God forbid we should tax these expositors with wilfully perverting the word of God: like Abimelech, *in the integrity of their hearts* they speak and act:* but, when the best of men adopt a favourite notion, eagerness to communicate what gives themselves so much pleasure too often takes pleace of every other consideration, and their conduct frequently reminds us, that the *integrity* of an expositor and the *truth* of his exposition are two very distinct things.

We will illustrate this remark by two passages from the worthy and reverend Mr. Lindsey. These are his words.†

" Rev. v. 13. *Blessing and honour, &c. be unto* " *him, that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb* " *for ever and ever. The blessing and honour is* " *tendered to the object* PRESENT *and* VISIBLE." But we have observed in St. Stephen's case, that idolatry doth not consist in worshipping an *invisible* object. The *visibility* and the *invisibility* of the object have nothing to do with the nature of the act. Is a papist less an idolater when he worships

* Gen. xx, 5, 6, † Apol. p. 130.

the host exposed to *view* than when he worships the same host inclosed in a pix?

" The object, says Mr. Lindsey, was *not upon* " *the throne; but standing before the midst of the* " *throne.*" The *posture* and the *place* of the object have nothing to do with the nature of the act. According to this reasoning, when *the Lord descended in the cloud, and* STOOD *with Moses on the mount,** he was not an object of worship; he was not on the throne. If sitting on the throne entitled Jesus to adoration, why is not our dispute ended? Does he not say, *I am set down with my Father in* HIS *throne.*†

Mr. Lindsey goes on: " *The reason also, which* " *is assigned for this* WORSHIP *being paid him*"— How! worship paid to Jesus Christ! I protest, were I reading an apology written as long ago as Justin Martyr's, I should suspect copyists of interpolating. I should think the manuscript had passed through Athanasian hands, and greatly needed emendation. For, in the *contents* of this very Apology, and in the *margin*, I read, *Religious worship to be paid to God the Father* ONLY, AND NOT TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Who would imagine that the author meant—*Religious worship to be paid to our Lord Jesus Christ, and a* HIGHER DEGREE *of it to the Father* ONLY.

Mr. Lindsey farther adds, " *The ascribing glory* " *and honour to Christ, does in* NO DEGREE " *imply him to be God, or* AUTHORISE THE WOR-

* Exod. xxxiv. 5. † Rev. iii. 21.

" SHIP OF HIM, *or prayer to him. It is no more* " *than a declaration of our reverence of him, and* " *high esteem of his most perfect moral character* " *and goodness: We may therefore, and we ought* " *on all proper occasions to join with his apostle* " *in saying,* 2 Pet. iii. 18. TO HIM BE GLORY " BOTH NOW AND FOR EVER." Christ's MOST perfect moral character deserves an ascription of glory to him *both now and for ever!* By parity of reason *every degree* of moral rectitude merits *some* ascription of glory to its possessor. I think, the author of the Apology hath a great degree of moral rectitude; but I dare not say, *Glory be to* THE APOLOGIST! I dare not say, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto* PAUL, *and unto* MOSES, *and unto* GABRIEL. I do not reason on the *force of the terms.* I reason thus. There is a doxology in the old testament composed by an inspired man, and by him appropriated to the blessed God.* It is profane to praise a creature in the form of that doxology.

Mr. Lindsey goes on. " 1 Tim. 1. 2. *I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. This is no address of thanks to Christ as an object of worship, but a sudden emotion of gratitude in the apostle's mind, and expression of his thankfulness to Christ for his own miraculous conversion,* Acts. ix. *and call to be an apostle.*"

* Compare 1 Chron. xxix. 11. with Rev. v. 13.

The question is not whether these words proceeded from a *sudden*, or a *slow* emotion; St. Paul was inspired to write them. IT IS AN *expression of his thankfulness* to Christ; but IT IS NO *address of thanks to Christ* as an object of worship. But this is taking for granted what ought to have been proved. We say, St. Paul gave praise to *Jesus* Christ his Lord for a certain blessing; which *God* had bestowed on him. Mr. Lindsey says, St. Paul gave praise to *Jesus* for the blessing; but he did not praise him as *God*. We ask the proof.

Were it necessary, we could prove from Mr. Lindsey's own concessions that Jesus Christ is God. "*St. Paul thanked Christ for his own miraculous conversion, and call to be an apostle.*" Christ, then, converted Saul, and conferred on him the apostleship. *But one Ananias, a devout man, having a good report of all the Jews, who dwelt at Damascus*, declares, that *the Lord* EVEN JESUS, *who appeared unto Saul in the way*, was THE GOD OF THEIR FATHERS. THIS LORD *appeared to Ananias, and sent Ananias to tell Saul, that he might be filled with the Holy Ghost.** If there be two truths clear in the holy scriptures, they are these; St. Paul ascribes his conversion to *God:* St. Paul thanks *Christ* for his conversion. The last proposition Mr. Lindsey allows; the first St. Paul repeatedly affirms. One passage may suffice: GOD, WHO COMMANDED LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS, *hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face*

* Acts xxii. 12. ix. 17. xxii. 14. ix. 17.

*of Jesus Christ.* If there be such a thing as drawing a fair inference from sure premises, we may certainly conclude that St. Paul thought Jesus Christ was God.

Let us recapitulate these articles, and let us see the insuperable difficulties, which attend the denial of the divinity of our Lord.

The new testament writers taught the heathens to call Jesus Christ *God;* however, they only meant to inform them, that Jesus Christ was an extraordinary *man.* They knew the heathens had for ages been accustomed to deify every extraordinary man; they intended to eradicate this idolatrous custom; and they undertook to do so by putting into their hands the history of a *man,* whom they called *God,* and to whom they ascribed more and more beneficent *acts,* than poets, philosophers, and historians had ever thought of ascribing to heathen *deities.*

The writers of the new testament described Jesus Christ to the Jews; a people zealous to superstition of every name and title of the one living and true God, by those very names and titles, by which that nation had for time immemorial described *God;* however, they only meant to inform the Jews that Jesus was an extraordinary *man!*

The writers of the new testament ascribed to Jesus Christ those attributes and perfections, which no mortal had ever pretended before to ascribe to any except to the *Almighty God,* and they did this in order to shew that he, who possessed these perfections, was a great *man!*

The writers of the history of Jesus declare, that he created the world, and that he preserves it; that he redeemed the church, and that he sanctifies and saves it; that he is the master of all, and that he shall be judge of all mankind. All these works, the performance of which, requiring infinite perfections, had always been ascribed to *God*, these writers ascribe to Jesus for the sake of convincing the world that he was an extraordinary *man!*

The writers of the new testament actually worshipped Jesus Christ THEIRSELVES; they said, THE FIRST MARTYR died invoking him; they declared, that ALL THE ANGELS *of God* were commanded to *worship him;* they said, they saw *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands round about the throne, and heard them say, Glory and honour be unto the Lamb for ever and ever;* they required EVERY KNEE *to bow at the name of Jesus,* every knee *in heaven,* every knee *in earth,* and every knee *under the earth;* they demanded this homage to be paid to Christ by men, who had always protested against the paying of such homage to any but God; however, they never intended to persuade men to worship Jesus as *God*, they only meant to procure a high degree of veneration to him as a very great *man!*

The writers of the new testament applied a great many prophecies, which foretold works to be performed by Almighty God, to Jesus Christ; they fixed on certain events in his life, and they declared that the production of these events was the accomplishment of the forementioned prophecies: yet

they did not mean to insinuate that Jesus was *God Almighty;* they only meant, that his doing what the prophets had said another should do, proved him to be the *servant* of that other, and a very extraordinary *man!*

The prophets had foretold, that Jesus should destroy idolatry, and bring men to worship the one living and true God of Israel. Jesus and his apostles endeavoured to fulfill these predictions: but, without their foreseeing what would happen, the disciples of Jesus worshipped him, a *man*, and not the *God* of Israel, and the bulk of christians have continued to do so for upwards of seventeen hundred years, and are likely to do so to the end of the world.

The Lord Jesus encouraged his followers to believe, that the spirit of truth should abide with them for ever: yet it appears by the event, Jesus Christ did not include in the promise that first great truth of christianity, on which all the rest are founded, the doctrine of his *person;* the Turks are in possession of this truth, the generality of christians have lost it. It is a point, which christians have always studied in those records, which are alone capable of informing them; it is a point, which Turks have never studied, being destitute of records, and of inclination to procure them; and yet the Turks are in possession of the true notion of Christ's person, and the generality of christians have embraced a false one.

Finally. A great many expressions peculiar to revelation are easy and natural, if the divinity of

Christ be allowed, which, if Christ be a mere man, either have no meaning, or a very absurd one; and yet Jesus is a mere man, and the expressions in question are capable of a very proper meaning by the help of learned and critical remarks, which criticisms, although essential to the understanding of those expressions, can never be understood by those plain readers, for whose sakes the expressions were written!

I appeal to any one of you, my brethren, whether the doctrine of our Lord's divinity be embarrassed with any difficulties equal to these; and whether these considerations ought not to induce us to allow St. John's proposition, He, WHO WAS MADE FLESH, WAS GOD.

A christian, who admits the truth of this proposition, walks in a plain and easy path. He reasons thus. The inspired writers call Jesus God: therefore he is God. The writers of the new testament describe Jesus by the same names, titles, attributes, and works, by which the prophets described God: therefore he is God. Jesus is worshipped by all the host of heaven: Jesus teaches his followers to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven: therefore I will worship Jesus on earth, as the angels worship him in heaven.

Some gentlemen have seen the evidence of this proposition, and have been forced to allow, that Jesus is God; who yet have endeavoured to explain the meaning of it away, and have allotted him only a delegated deity. Let us take a little circuit in order the more effectually to discover the

truth. We will suppose a plain honest man endeavouring to obtain a right notion of the doctrine of our Saviour's person, with only the help of scripture, and common sense. We will give him six propositions to examine, and hear his conclusions.

## PROPOSITION I.

Jesus was an *Impostor.*

If Jesus were not a good and virtuous man, he was certainly a *very* wicked person. A man, who could act that part in the world, which he did, must have been either virtuous or vicious in an *extreme.* Now I am able to prove, that a mind extremely depraved by vice could not have comprehended, much less would it have recommended, such a morality as Jesus Christ taught. Jesus must have been a serious, thoughtful, VIRTUOUS MAN.

## PROPOSITION II.

Jesus was a *good man,* and taught a better morality than any other philosopher had taught.

Jesus was a GREAT as well as a good man. A long succession of prophets foretold his coming. His advent was announced by miraculous events. His life was a perpetual display of beneficent works, and after his death he rose again, and ascended to heaven. Societies, formed under his direction, embracing his doctrine, and practising

his precepts, have extirpated innumerable errors and vices, that had for ages destroyed the happiness of mankind. Of him princes have learned humanity, judges equity, the rich liberality, and the poor content. Of him scholars have learned their noblest sciences, and the most effectual motives and means of pursuing them. Of him mankind learned to esteem the amiable, to pity the wretched, and to take all their species for their brethren; a science that few philosophers imagined, and which none of them could persuade the world to receive. From him the greatest moral good has proceeded: him therefore I esteem the wisest, the greatest, the best of mankind, *the first-born of every creature.**

## PROPOSITION III.

Jesus was an *extraordinary man*, who lived in the reign of Tiberius.

Jesus Christ was not only an extraordinary man, he was a SINGULAR person. That is affirmed of him, which cannot be affirmed of any other person. He not only lived in the reign of Tiberius, he lived long before his appearance in the flesh. He *came down from heaven*;† he *came forth from the Father*, when he *came into the world*;‡ He was *before Abraham*;§ he had a *glory with the Father before the world was*.‖ He was *before all things*,

* Col. i. 15. † John vi. 38. 62. ‡ John xvi. 27, 28.
§ John viii. 58. ‖ John xvii. 5.

*and all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, were created by him.** Our Saviour therefore EXISTED before his incarnation.

## PROPOSITION IV.

The *human soul* of Jesus existed before his assumption of flesh.

*Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth,* always *formeth the spirit of man* WITHIN HIM.† And the man Jesus was *made in* ALL THINGS *like unto his brethren.*‡ The scripture no where affirms the pre-existence of the human soul of Jesus, and, had it pre-existed, it could not have created the world, for the scriptures expressly declare, that creation is above human power. The man Jesus must therefore be united to A NATURE MORE THAN HUMAN; he must be a complex person. Hitherto the term Jesus has been put for a person consisting of both the constituent parts of a true and perfect man; hereafter it will include the idea of another nature superior to the human, and united to it; but of what rank I have not yet determined. Let me advert to the next proposition, and let me forget, that it was laid down by a right reverend and learned minister of Christ.§

* Col. i. 16. 17, † Zech. xii. 1. ‡ Heb. ii. 17. § Lord Bishop of Clogher in Ireland.

## PROPOSITION V.

The *Archangel Michael*, as a superior spiritual existence, was united to that system of organized matter, which served our Lord in quality of a body, performed the offices of a reasonable soul in it, and gave him his supreme dignity as the Son of God. This *tutelar angel* of the Jews often appeared to the patriarchs and prophets.

There is in nature a scale of being; one creature riseth above another in excellence. A vegetable excels a stone, an animal excels a vegetable, a rational being excells a mere animal, and so on. This idea is preserved in scripture. *There are celestial bodies, and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.** The scriptures assign to man a place *above* all other animals, and *below* angels. *Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels, thou hast put all* other beings *under his feet.*† This is the rank of the *human* nature of *Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels.*‡ But Jesus hath a nature *superior* to the human, it seems: is this superior nature angelic? or is it superangelical? of what order is it?

St. Paul determines it to be SUPERANGELICAL. *The Son is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of his person, being made,* that is to

* 1 Cor. xv. 10. † Psa. viii. 5, 6, &c. ‡ Heb. ii. 9.

say, being accounted *by so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come. He took not on him the nature of angels. Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my* SON? *If the word spoken by* ANGELS *was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken of by the* LORD? According to St. Paul then the man Jesus hath a nature superior to that of angels; he styles him on that account *The Lord, the Son.** Farther, St. Paul saith, *unto the* SON, *Thy throne, O* GOD! *is for ever and ever.* SON! LORD! GOD! God of an eternal throne! This is the nature then, which existed before the man Jesus; this is he, who took flesh, that is to say, who took the human nature into union with himself; this is he, (for who so likely?) this is he, who appeared to the patriarchs, not the *tutelar angel* of the Jews, but the *God*, whose *throne is for ever and ever, the sceptre of whose kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness.*†

## PROPOSITION VI.

God *may* create an infinite series of spiritual agents, in subordination one to another; some of which *may*, by an authority communicated to them

* Heb. i. 2. † Heb. i. 8.

from the supreme God, act *as Gods* with regard to inferior beings. God *may* enable such a one to create a world. Jesus Christ *is* a being of this kind: He is a DELEGATED GOD.

I am not a philosopher exercising the speculations of my uncertain reason to form a conjectural proposition: I am a christian endeavouring to come at the meaning of an infallible proposition, which, I allow, is laid down by God himself. My concern is not with what God *may* do: but with what he declares he *hath done*. His deity is his glory: hath he given it to another? *I am Jehovah and* THERE IS NONE ELSE; *there is* NO GOD BESIDES ME. *A just God and a Saviour,* THERE IS NONE BESIDES ME. *I am God, and* THERE IS NONE LIKE ME. IS THERE A GOD BESIDES ME? YEA, THERE IS NO GOD, I KNOW NOT ANY.* This is the God of my bible: but, besides this God, there is, in my proposition, *another* God, a delegated God. Here are TWO GODS. Here is a supreme God, and a subordinate God; a natural God, and an artificial God; a great God, and a little God; a philosopher has one God; a Jew has one God; a christian, it seems, has TWO GODS. What a world of difficulties belong to this proposition! Is this delegated God entitled to worship? The idea of a God without a title to religious worship is an idea inadmissible. Is all worship to be paid to the subordinate God, or does the supreme God claim any?

* Isa. xlv. 5, 6, 21. xlvi. 9. xliv. 8.

Which acts of devotion belong to the one, and which to the other? A mistake would be dangerous, and I have no guide. Every inspired writer forsakes me. Jesus Christ, it seems, *created all things that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible;* and a creator, it seems, proves, by creating, his *eternal power and Godhead.** The proposition says, God *may* empower a creature to create. Perhaps he may. But God declares he hath not done so. *Who measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span?* who *comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Lift up your eyes on high and behold,* WHO HATH CREATED the heavens? *Why sayest thou, O Jacob! My way is hid from the Lord? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that* THE EVERLASTING GOD, THE LORD, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH *fainteth not, neither is weary? Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor had taught him?*† I am then obliged to reject the notion of a subordinate God, a delegated creator; and to admit that the one living and true God united himself to the man Jesus for the purpose of displaying his glory, and thereby of communicating felicity to men, the lowest order of intelligent beings. In Jesus the divine nature and the human are united, and therefore the complex person Jesus

* Rom. i. 20. † Isa. xl. 12, 26, 27, 28, 13.

is styled God. Thus I have *one God, and one mediator* between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus.** As God he requires and accepts a mediation; as man he mediates, and *presents* TO HIMSELF *a glorious church, holy, and without blemish.*† *Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh.*‡

Thus far, my brethren! revelation conducts the plain christian traveller; here it stops; and, as he, who goes forward, must travel either without a guide, or with one who is ignorant of the road, we ought not to be astonished if he lose his way. Happy for christians, had they rested here without *philosophical explications!* Were this a proper place, (but I am not writing on the doctrine of the Trinity,) I believe, it would be very easy to prove, that the primitive christians received this simple testimony, just as revelation gave it; and that when, about 200 years after Christ, they began to practise the art of explaining what they did not understand, they produced a novel notion called a Trinity, and with it disputes, creeds, subscriptions, proscriptions, persecutions, wars, and other calamitous consequences, which have disgraced christianity, and divided christians from that day to this.

A SCRIPTURE TRINITY undoubtedly there is: but our present concern is with our Lord's divinity; and had a primitive christian been catechised, I believe he would have answered in some such manner as this.

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † Eph. v. 27. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

*Question.* Are christians atheists?

*Answer.* No. We believe a God, who *is a spirit*, and we *worship him in spirit and in truth.**

*Q.* Do christians worship more Gods than one?

*A.* No. The heathens have *lords many, and gods many:* but christians have *but one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*†

*Q.* Who is Jesus Christ?

*A. Jesus Christ is a man.*‡ Jesus Christ is *God.*§

*Q.* Do christians think, that the man Jesus is deified?

*A.* The deification of creatures forms a science which they call demonology. Christians consider demonology, or the *doctrines of demons*, as the doctrines of *seducers;* and *in the latter times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to them.*‖

*Q.* Do christians worship Jesus Christ?

*A.* We do not worship the man Jesus: but we do worship the God, who dwells in the man; for *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;*¶ *and through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father.**

*Q.* Do christians think that the Father is the Godhead of Jesus?

*A.* No. We think, *Jesus, being in the form*

* John iv. 24. † 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5. § John i. 1. ‖ 1 Tim. iv. 1. ¶ Col. ii, 9. * Eph. ii. 18.

*of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.**

*Q.* Do not christians then worship two gods?

*A.* We abhor the thought. We say with the Jews, *The Lord our God is one Lord; for there is one God, and there is none other but he.*†

*Q.* Is not this a little mysterious?

*A. The acknowledgement of the deity,* both *of the Father and of Christ, is a mystery in which are treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*‡

*Q.* Do not christians believe, that their scriptures unfold mysteries?

*A.* We believe that our scriptures have unfolded a thousand mysteries; but we do not believe that they unfold the mysterious nature of God; *treasures of wisdom and knowledge* ARE HID *in it.*§ Our scriptures are intended to inform us more what God is to us than what he is in himself.

*Q.* Do christiians believe then what they cannot comprehend?

*A.* They do, and so do all the rest of mankind. *God doth great things, which men* CANNOT COMPREHEND.‖ *His way in the sea, his footsteps in the great waters are* NOT KNOWN: is it strange that *his way in the sanctuary* should be mysterious?¶

*Q.* Why do christians concern themselves with incomprehensibles?

*A.* They act in religion as men act in the world.

* Phil. ii. 5, 6. † Mark ii. 29. 32. ‡ Col. ii. 2, 3. § Col. ii. 3. ‖ Job xxxvii. 5. ¶ Psal. lxxvii. 19. 13.

They know not the *nature*, but they do know the *use* of objects. A man be a good mariner, who can neither account for the saltness of the sea, nor for the action of the air.

*Q.* Does not the christian faith discard reason?

*A.* God forbid! Reason asks and obtains evidence that God speaks, and faith believes what he says. Is it irrational to believe him, who *cannot lye?** A believer admits the *evidence of things* NOT SEEN. *By faith Noah, being warned of God* OF THINGS NOT SEEN AS YET, *prepared an ark. By faith Abraham when he was called, obeyed, and he went out,* NOT KNOWING WHITHER HE WENT. *All* the patriarchs *died in the belief* of a proposition, of which they had but obscure and imperfect ideas.† A philosopher speculates objects with his own eyes; a believer beholds them, as it were with the eyes of God himself. A christian neither hides his reason in a napkin, nor drives an illicit trade with it; he puts it into the hands of the best exchanger, and receives his own with usury.

I repeat it again, my brethren, the primitive christians rested in the SIMPLICITY OF REVELATION, and they were wise in doing so. This accounts for, what may appear very strange, the abundance of *quotations*, which Dr. Clarke on the one side, Dr. Waterland on the *other*, and Dr. Whitby on *both*, have brought from the primitive christian writers in proof of their own systems.

* Titus i. 2. † Heb. xi.

The truth is, the primitive christians had never heard of their theses; they had never thought of anatomizing God, and therefore they said nothing about it. When it became the fashion for every body to EXPLAIN what nobody understood, forth came torrents of impenetrable jargon, *great swelling words* of no meaning, and for these christians became gladiators, and fought; and that, which had been said to the worst of the Jews, was too often said to the best of christians, *Thou shalt die by the sword.*

In these fatal disputes, that faith, which prevailed at court, was orthodoxy for the time; but very little regard was due to such orthodoxy, however wise it might be called, or however popular it might become. "*Public wisdom,*" says a great man,* "public wisdom is a mere Proteus; and, "not to consider it in pagan or Mohammedan "countries, amongst the Jews it once was the wis- "dom of Ahab and Jezebel, and afterwards of "Annas and Caiaphas, and in christian regions "it hath appeared in an hundred shapes. It sets "out with a great shew of religion: it begins with "*the gospel according to St. Matthew;* and it of- "ten ends in *the gospel according to Mr. Hobbes.*"

Here I was going to put a period to this letter; but three questions, which will naturally occur, seem to require answers. You will probably ask, how is it that wise and worthy men mistake this scriptural notion of Christ's divinity, and maintain

* Dr. Jortin.

erroneous opinions about it? Next, is this doctrine free from all difficulty, and liable to no objection? And lastly, what conduct ought a christian, who believes the divinity of Christ, to observe to one, who doubts or disbelieves it?

First: How is it that wise and worthy men mistake this notion of Christ's divinity, and maintain erroneous opinions about it?

A full answer to this question would require a perfect knowledge of all the operations of the human mind in investigating truth, of all the influences, that the tempers of the heart have over the operations of the mind, and of all the circumstances, which colour the objects of our meditation. Of this knowledge I am destitute, and therefore my answer will account for only a few, of many causes of error on this article.

1. Men mistake by not distinguishing objects of *pure* revelation, from objects of natural reason, and therefore they confound believing with reasoning. I am not required to believe any thing about the moon; it is a sensible object, and I am to look at it, and to reason about it. God requires me to believe the deity of Jesus Christ. Deity is an invisible object. I never saw, nor ever conceived an object analogous to it. I cannot reason about it; I believe it.

2. Men mistake by subjecting God to laws, which actually prevail in some cases, but which, we dare not say, prevail in all. The reverend Mr. Lindsey says, "*Christ's character as mediator is* UTTERLY INCOMPATIBLE *with the prac*

*tice of making him the object of religious worship. He* CANNOT *be God, and the minister of God.*"* Is Mr. Lindsey sure of this? Were we to grant, that nothing like this passeth among men, would it certainly follow, that nothing like this passeth in heaven? The possible world is a region unexplored, and it is rash to say GOD CANNOT be this, he CANNOT do that. St. Paul writes as if he thought God could do this. *God hath accepted us in the beloved.*† *We labour to be accepted of Christ.*‡ *Christ will present a glorious church to* HIMSELF.§ THE GREAT GOD, *and our Saviour Jesus Christ,* GAVE HIMSELF *for us,* THAT HE MIGHT *redeem us from all iniquity, and* PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF *a peculiar people.*‖

3. Men mistake by affixing modern ideas to ancient terms. Every sensible writer considers ideas as the souls of words, and words as bodies, or as sensible objects, which express invisible ideas to the senses of others. As far as the poverty of materials will permit, such writers adapt expression to meaning. The sign remains for centuries, the thing signified by the inventor of the sign is volatile, and escapes, and each beholder first throws his own image upon the sign, next receives the reflection of it, and last imputes the same signification to the inventor of the sign. St. Paul had some determinate meaning under the word, which we render PERSON, and which he applies to God:¶

* Apol. p. 126, 127. † Eph. i. 3, 6. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 9, 10.
§ Eph. v. 27. ‖ Titus ii. 13, 14. ¶ Heb. i. 3.

but he had a different meaning under the same word, when he applied it to FAITH, and therefore we translate it SUBSTANCE;* and he used the same word in a sense different from both the former, when he applied it to BOASTING, and therefore we render it CONFIDENCE:† what are we doing when we dispute about ancient detached terms impregnated with modern meaning? Are we not fighting for a country, which belongs to neither of us? If there be such a thing as coming at a *writer's* meaning, we must do it by a careful attention to *his* scope, before the birth of our system. Should a word appear vague, indeterminate, obsolete, fight for it who will, he is the wisest man, who leaves it where he found it.

4. Men mistake by turning plain literal words into tropes and figures. By this kind of learning they disembowel religion, and present us with a gospel as gay, as hieroglyphical, and as dead as an Egyptian mummy. The gospel, as the Lord Jesus left it, was a *word quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart:* ‡ that is to say, it was a body of doctrine animated with grand motives, with the dignity of its author, the horror of its penalties, the united efforts of justice and love, displayed in the death of the cross, and in the immediate bestowment of heaven after death. But by the help of a certain art called Rhetoric,

* Heb. xi. 1. † 2 Cor. ix. 4. ‡ Heb. iv. 12.

this body is killed for the sake of being embalmed. Jesus is a metaphorical God, hell is an eastern allegory, the devil is a prosopopeia, the atonement is a thing called a metonymy, the wicked are annihilated, and the virtuous sleep without dreaming till the heavens are no more. There can be no better canon of interpretation, than that which an amiable prelate* has given us: scripture is to be taken in that sense, in which the common people, who heard it at first, took it. Assuredly the common people never thought of these senses!

5. Learned men, who are ashamed to think with the populace, mistake through their dexterity at criticism. Criticism is a most valuable branch of literature; but, like every thing else, it is liable to abuse. One half of criticism is to find a fault, the other half to mend it; and many undertake the last, who are only capable of the first. An atheist turns critic, and relieves me from the difficulties, that attend natural and revealed religion; but, having freed me from these, he gives me the more, and the greater difficulties of atheism to digest. I dispose of the mysteries of christianity; but, I receive in return the mysteries, the absurdities, and the impossibilities of atheism. A sober christian critic removes my difficulties on a certain passage of scripture, which regards, suppose, our Lord's divinity: but he obscures and perplexes a thousand other passages, which ascribe to him more than humanity.

* The present Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Carlisle.

I wish I knew how to give you, without foreign words, a just notion of the futility of those criticisms, on which much of this controversy turns. The plainest example, that occurs to me at present, is the famous passage in Acts, [vii. 59.] which describes St. Stephen addressing Jesus Christ. The text, as we read it in the English testament, is thus: and they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. This reading affords us a full proof of Christ's divinity, for the martyr prays to Jesus, and calls him God, and the most eager opposers of the divinity of Jesus allow, that the reading, were it genuine, would prove the point. But, say they, St. Luke wrote in Greek, not in English, and the original ought to be examined. You observe, my brethren, that the word *God* in the text is printed in the pale italic letter. The translators hit on this plain way of informing a reader, who did not understand the language, in which any part of scripture was written, what original words had corresponding words in English, and what words had not. All words printed in the black roman character correspond to the original words, and all in the pale italic letter are added by the translators to make up, what they supposed the sense. We allow the critic's reason for examining the original to be just. He examines, and renders the text thus: they stoned Stephen, who was calling on (invoking) and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* This is a criticism! The word *God* is got rid of, and the text, it seems, must be read,

* So Mr. Purver reads it, in Mr. Lindsey's Apology, p. 129.

*Stephen was calling on and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* Far be it from me, my dear plain brethren, to make your ears tingle with the sounds of verbs active, verbs passive, verbs transitive, verbs neuter, and so on; but permit me to ask you, do you not feel the want of a word in the new translation? *Stephen was calling on* .... calling on whom? say you. Well! here is another reading, *Stephen was invoking and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* Now, what will you do with this word *invoking?* If you look into a small English dictionary, (God grant you may never be driven to dictionaries to understand your bibles!) you will find, *to invoke, is to call upon;* and if you go to a large dictionary, you will learn that there is a theological invocation, and a poetical invocation, and, in short, that to *invoke* always signifies to *call upon.* You still ask, whom did Stephen invoke; on whom did he call? The old translators knew you would ask these questions; and having read that they were *workers of iniquity, who called not upon* GOD;* that God had said to every pious Jew, consequently to Stephen, *call upon* ME *in the day of trouble, and* I *will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify* ME;† and that *whosoever* should *call on the name of* THE LORD should *be saved;* the translators, I say, for these just and weighty reasons, put in the word *God: Stephen was calling upon God,* &c.

Moreover, the old translators knew, that the

* Psal. liii. 4. † Psal. l. 15.

christians of St. Stephen's time invoked, or called on Jesus as God. One example of their invocation shall suffice at present. *The Lord* EVEN JESUS, *who appeared unto Paul in the way*, SENT *Ananias to comfort* Paul. *To the Lord*, who sent Ananias to comfort Paul, *Ananias said, all here*, that is to say, all the christians at Damascus, CALL ON (invoke) THY *name.** Ananias exhorted Paul to *be baptized, and wash away his sins*, CALLING ON (invoking) *the name of the Lord.*† Paul obeyed, and afterwards expressed this invocation in these words; I WORSHIP THE GOD OF MY FATHERS, *after the way which the Jews call heresy.*‡ The old translators therefore had the highest reason for inserting the word *God;* and the present criticism is futile and of no value. It happens to a verbal critic in turning over Greek dictionaries, as it happened to you in turning to English vocabularies; there is only one article in which you differ; yours is a modest ignorance, his is a proud one; yours lies naked, his is concealed under high sounding words. A sound critic is not an exchanger of words: but he is an investigator of things.

When the reverend Mr. Lindsey lays aside his too modest deference to favourite names, and allows himself to make use of his own good sense, he investigates things, and, although it involve his argument in contradiction, yet he grants the godhead of Jesus Christ. I will take the liberty to

* Acts ix. 17. 14. † xxii. 16. ‡ xxiv. 14.

place *two passages in the Apology* in contrast, and remark the conclusion.

1. Melancthon thought, and justly as it should seem, that *prayer is the highest act of worship, the proper honour of* GOD, *and peculiar to* HIM ALONE.*

2. *The principal argument for Christ's divinity is to be fetched from* religious worship and *prayer being addressed to him.*‡

1. *Unquestionably Stephen* made this request, *addressed* this *prayer to the* LORD JESUS.†

2. Unquestionably *Stephen* made this request, *addressed this prayer to the Lord Jesus.*§

Mr. Lindsey adds, "if there be no authority for *praying to Christ*, as we have shewn there is not, *the divinity of Christ* falleth of course." Of which conclusion we beg leave to offer the following emendation, as a sense, which the scope absolutely requires. If there be St. Stephen's authority for praying to Christ, as Mr. Lindsey has shewn there is, the divinity of Christ is established of course.

Time would fail, were we to attempt to enumerate the sources of the mistakes of good men, and I close this article with one more, which, I fear, is too common. Disputants will not do justice to the terms used by their opponents. We are blamed for praying to Jesus Christ. The terms Jesus Christ are sometimes put for only the *man*, who was born of the virgin Mary, *consisting of soul and*

* Apol. p. 136. † 129. ‡ 136. § 129.

*body.* Sometimes they are put for only *God,* who united his nature to that of the son of Mary: and sometimes they are put for that complex being consisting of both a divine and human nature, who is styled Emanuel God with us. The last is the usual meaning of the terms. To him we pray, not to his soul, not to his body, nor to both united; prayer to either would be idolatry; but we pray to God, who hath united himself to the man, and in whom he dwelleth with all *the fulness of the Godhead.* If we will not distinguish these objects, we may dispute without end. An error maybe attacked, which nobody believes; a practice may be condemned, which nobody performs.

You ask, next, Is the doctrine of our Lord's divinity free from all difficulty, and liable to no objection? Give me leave to answer this by laying down three undeniable propositions.

1. There never has been a system of religion proposed to mankind free from all difficulty, and liable to no objection.

2. Christianity is a system of religion, that hath the least difficulties, and is liable to the fewest objections.

3. Atheism is clogged with more difficulties, and liable to more objections than any religion in the world.

The part of a rational creature therefore, is to embrace the christian religion. We apply this reasoning to the present controversy. A doubt ariseth about the nature of Jesus Christ. Two opposite

propositions lie before me, and each has its difficulties. I take that which has fewest.

For example. There are many passages in the new testament, which express the inferiority of Jesus Christ to the Father. *My Father is* GREATER *than I. All power is* GIVEN *unto me. Of that day knoweth no man, no not the angels,* NEITHER THE SON; *but the Father.* If I embrace the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, I meet with no difficulty in two of these texts, and but a few in the middle one. But all those passages, which say he is *God,* he is *equal with God, he created all things,* and so on, become extremely difficult, and actually inexplicable and intolerable. Perceiving that my difficulties increase by embracing the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity, I turn to the doctrine of his divinity, always remembering that this retains the whole doctrine of his humanity, and gives me a new idea of Christ, before which most of my difficulties vanish. I have no difficulties on those passages, which express his inferiority, for, in my system, he is, as man; inferior to the Father. I have no difficulties on the other passages, which express his dignity, for, in my system, he is God, equal with the Father. A difficulty remains, indeed, but it does not lie in my bible; it is transfered in this system to the *object;* and this is no difficulty at all to me. I know so little of the infinite mind, and so much of my own imperfection, that I am not surprised, that I, an insect of yesterday, that I, glimmering and guessing through a few feeble organs, that I, con-

fined to a little narrow contracted sphere, that I should not be able to comprehend the essence of him, who *holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.** *The Lord spoke the ten commandments unto all the assembly of Israel out of thick darkness, and added no more.*† *The Lord said,* He would *dwell in thick darkness,* even to a Solomon.‡ Why then should any man be ashamed to say with a prophet, *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour?*§

To close. You ask, what conduct ought a christian, who believes the divinity of Christ, to observe to one who doubts or disbelieves it? Before I answer this, permit me to transcribe, from a great man, what he ought *not* to do.‖

" In the fourth century were held thirteen councils against Arius, fifteen for him, and seventeen for the Semi-arians; in all, forty-five.

" How could the Arians, in the time of Constantius and Valens, bring themselves to such an unchristian persecuting temper? How could they oppress their fellow christians the Consubstantialists, who, supposing them to have been in an error, fell into it through a religious fear of ascribing too little to their Redeemer, and of not paying him sufficient honour? Can a man love his Saviour, and hate his brother for a mistake of this kind?

* Job xxvi. 9. † Deut. v. 22. ‡ 1 Kings viii. 12. § Isa. xlv. 15. ‖ Dr. Jortin's Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. iii.

" And how could the Consubstantialists persuade themselves that an Arian, who perhaps had suffered for professing christianity in times of distress, who believed Christ to be his Maker, his Saviour, his King, and his Judge, would *chuse* to detract from his dignity, and to offend him in whom he placed all his hopes of salvation? Human nature is not capable of this folly, and if the man was in an error, yet in such a person the error must have been involuntary, a mere defect of the understanding, and not a fault of the will.

" A christian, and a lover of peace, who lived in obscurity, and whose name I cannot tell, stood up, and said :—

" My brethren! The things to be believed are " few, the things to be done are many; but you " behave yourselves, as if the reverse of this were " true. St. Paul tells us, *The grace of God, that* " *bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;* " *teaching us, that denying ungodliness and* " *worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteous-* " *ly and godly in this present world, looking for* " *that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance* " *of the great God, and (of) our Saviour Jesus* " *Christ.* Concerning the nature of Jesus you " can dispute incessantly, and concerning the word " *grace*, you will probably dispute no less; but " the rest of the sentence you disregard as of small " consequence or importance. What, I beseech " you, must the jews and pagans conceive of you " and of your religion? And what do the holy an- " gels think, who look down upon your contentions?

" These blessed and compassionate spirits pity you,
" and think you mere children. But when from con-
" tending, you proceed to beating your fellow ser-
" vants, to persecuting and destroying, they con-
" sider you as most malicious and wicked children;
" their pity is changed into indignation, and they
" would strike you dead, if the Supreme Governor
" did not stay their hand, and remind them that
" such disorders must needs arise, and shall one
" day be rectified."

" So said this *unknown;* but behold the consequence! The Consubstantialists called him an Arian, and the Arians called him a Consubstantialist."

A peaceable christian, who lives in an age of dispute, has but two ways before him. Either he must enter into all the violent measures of the combatants on one side, or he must suffer the reproaches of both. The former is not very easy to a man of a pacific mind; it would be a punishment to him to spend his precious time in hovering over a dispute, first to extract the venom of the controversy, and last to spit poison in the faces of those, who for conscience sake support it. Beside, he could not undergo the fatigue of learning all the hard, long, frightful names, which fiery controvertists call one another, and which, by the way, he takes for a kind of scholastic billingsgate; less still could he bear the reproaches of his own conscience, which would sometimes say to him, *No doubt you are the* man, *and wisdom shall die with you! Will you speak wickedly for God, and*

*talk deceitfully for him? Should your lies make men hold their peace, and when you mock shall no man make you ashamed? O that you would altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom!** And least of all could he sustain the thought of looking the judge of the whole earth in the face at the last day, *who*, he fears, would *cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers*, were he to *beat his fellow servants*.† A case, in which a man must incur either the displeasure of God, or that of his fellow creatures, is easily decided. He must then candidly speak his sentiments, and determine to submit to the reproaches of both.

There is indeed a middle way. There is an art of subscribing one thing and believing another; of preaching that a part is greater than a whole, and believing that a whole is greater than a part: but this art transforms the grave minister of Christ into the fantastic harlequin of the stage; and an honest man, however he may laugh at a trick on the theatre, is shocked at the idea of a knave in the church.

But both sides will reproach him! Be it so. Their reproaches will inflame his zeal for moderation. Let us suppose a modest christian adopting our notion of Christ's divinity, freely delivering his sentiments upon it, and thereby exposing himself to the ungovernable reproaches of zealots on both sides; could he not, think you, peaceably reply to their invectives?

* Job xi. xii. xiii. † Luke xii. 45, 46.

You hold the divinity of Christ says one; you are unfashionable; it is the modern mark of a genius to explode it. Beside, you are impolitic; were you as dull as an ass, you would be reputed learned and wise, if you renounced this vulgar error. The modest man would reply, carnal policy is no part of christianity. Fashion in religion is no law to me. I have no ambition for the reputation of genius and learning. Such a reputation might be a misfortune to me. It happens to the wise as it happens to the rich. The reputation of being rich only fills the house with beggars. Scaliger was reputed learned and communicative, and he was plagued with finding solutions to the difficulties of so many dunces, that he wished he had never been taught to write. My ambition is to please God. May I do that, and I shall be content.

You believe the divinity of Christ, says another; all your arguments are old, and have been answered a hundred times over. He would reply, novelty and antiquity weigh nothing with me on this article; truth is all in all. God is my witness, I have endeavoured to divest myself of prejudices. I have turned the subject on every side. I have followed evidence without knowing, and without caring, whither it would carry me. I have felt no unkind emotions in examining the arguments against my thesis. I have *bowed my knees to the Father of glory,* and have prayed him to *enlighten the eyes of my understanding,* and to grant me *the spirit of wisdom in the knowledge of*

*him.** But after all I think the old arguments demonstrative, and the answers inconclusive.

O says a third, you cannot be so ignorant as you pretend to be. You have read the great Dr. Clarke! Have you never seen those critical dissections of texts by learned men, which explain all the passages, that seem to support your nostrum, and prove that they are all on the opposite side? He would beg leave to reply:—I have read Dr. Clarke, and a hundred doctors more; and I have read also a saying of one, who, although he was no graduate, was greater than them all. He says, *Call no man your master upon earth; for one is your master, even Christ.*† Yes, I have seen many a critical anatomist dissect a text; but, while he instructed me in occult science, he destroyed that general pleasing effect, which the Creator had produced by the whole. You can never persuade me, that an article so important, as the doctrine of the *object* of our worship is allowed to be, lies concealed in depths of erudition. The belief of Christ's divinity is an effect, I think, produced by the features of the face of revelation, if you will pardon the expression. I have all the veneration for Dr. Clarke that I ought to have; but in my opinion, I could make more converts to the belief of the being of a God with an oyster and a nettle, than he could with his mathematical propositions. Mathematics and criticisms may confirm a wise

* Eph: ii. 14. i. 17, 18. † Matt. xxii.

man in religion; but wo be to the religion that hangs upon them!

You cannot worship God, says another, if you believe the divinity of Christ, without either distracting and dividing your mind between two or three objects, or conceiving clearly of none. What ideas, replies the modest man, you may have affixed to my terms, I know not; but I find no more distraction of mind in worshipping one God, the mode of whose subsistence is unknown to me, through the man Jesus Christ, than I do in talking to you. Some philosophers think, the body is a kind of covering thrown over the soul, at once to serve its useful purposes in this life, and to conceal its nature till the next. This life is for action; the next for speculation. It was wise in God, when he *came down upon mount Sinai*, IN THE SIGHT OF ALL *the* Jews, to *set bounds unto the people*, to forbid their *touching the mount* under pain of death, and to *charge the priests and the people not to* BREAK THROUGH UNTO JEHOVAH TO GAZE.* These precautions were proper. Without them curiosity would have banished reverence, and the little minds of the beholders would have lost all inclination to listen and adore

I suspect, exclaims another, a little collusion. You certainly question the truth of that doctrine yourself, which you persuade others to believe. I abhor collusion, replies our respondent. I have mildly told you that I think you a most worthy

* Exod. xix. 11, 12. 24. 21.

man; but that by applying your rules of elucidation to a proposition, which is not subject to them, you have fallen into an error. Is no body honest but he, who abuses you? And must I knock you on the head to convince you that I am in earnest?

Zealots on the other side beset the poor man. What a strange divinity of Christ you hold, says one. Why do not you explain it by the Athanasian creed, or by some approved system? Because, answers he, I do not understand it well enough, and because creeds do not satisfy me. Would you have me explain what I do not understand?

Why do not you persecute, at least with the tongue, those monstrous Unitarians? Because I have no warrant from Christ to do so, nor the least inclination to forge one.

This is well enough. But why do you praise them in every company? Because a mistaking man may merit praise for that very industry, which has led him into an error, and for that integrity, which makes him, against his interest, support it.

But what occasion is there to keep company with them, and to maintain an intimacy with them? Because on every other article they edify me, and on this we agree to differ. In the possession of this truth, I think I have the advantage of them. In regard to many others, I am not worthy to speak to them; I glory in being their disciple?

In what light then do you consider a sincere man, who denies our Lord's divinity? In the light of a mistaking brother; in every other attitude an ob-

ject of esteem; and in that of denying the divinity of my Lord an object of my tenderest compassion.

All this argues great coldness to your Lord! I would rather be frozen into a formalist than inflamed with the fire of hell; in the first case I should be a harmless statue; in the last a destroyer like the devil.

I rejoice, my brethren, that I am neither teaching you a new doctrine, nor exciting a new temper in defending it; and I say these things only for the sake of confirming your faith and practice. Go on, and prosper. *Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces.** *Contend earnestly*, but not uncivilly, *for the faith once delivered to the saints.*† Pity those christians in every church, who plead the cause of Christ with penal arguments, who *go into the house of their God, and eat, and drink, and curse Abimelech.*‡ Remember, the primitive christians were happy till they began to attempt to EXPLAIN the nature of Christ. Profit by their mistake; and may *the precious things of the earth and a fulness thereof*, with *the good will of him, who dwelt in the bush, come upon the head* of each of you, and of every one, who for conscience sake hath *been* SEPARATED *from his brethren!*§ So prays your affectionate pastor,

ROBERT ROBINSON.

*Chesterton, Feb. 5,* 1776.

* Psa. cxxii. 7. † Jude 3. ‡ Judges ix. 27. § Deut. xxiii. 16.

# *POSTSCRIPT.*

## PROOFS AND *ILLUSTRATIONS.*

IN arguing for the divinity of Jesus Christ, in the foregoing Letter, I have taken several maxims for granted, and have not attempted to prove them. As the people, to whom the Letter is addressed, allowed these maxims, I had a right to suppose them; but, as the Letter may possibly fall into the hands of some, who may doubt or deny them, it may not be impertinent to subjoin a few proofs and illustrations, explaining what may be doubtful, and proving what may be denied.

In general I have taken for granted the following propositions.

I. The Books of the Old and New Testament were given by divine inspiration.

II. The inspired writings contain all things necessary to be believed and practised in religion.

III. The words by which the inspired writers expressed their ideas, are to be understood in that sense, in which the people, to whom they wrote, generally understood them at the time of their writing, unless notice be given of the contrary.

IV. The belief of a proposition does not necessarily imply a clear idea of that object, of which the proposition affirms any thing.

As these maxims are interwoven with the whole argument, I shall not consider either of them apart: but shall follow the order of the letter, and throw in the proofs of them promiscuously, as the articles in question require.

Page 12. *Compare the language of the new Testament with the state of the pagan world at the time of its publication.* It is here supposed, 1. That God communicated true ideas of religious objects to the apostles. 2. That the apostles intended to convey these ideas to the pagans. 3. That for the purpose of conveying their ideas, they preached and wrote to the pagans. 4. That the apostles used terms, to which the pagans had been accustomed before their time, and which were then in common use amongst them. 5. That the apostles affixed such ideas to the terms, as the pagans affixed to them. And lastly, that they transferred ideas, known to the heathens under those terms, to an object, who had been before unknown to them, that is to Jesus Christ. It would require a volume to discuss these articles fully; but I shall only explain myself briefly by the following remarks.

1. The heathens had a notion of a being superior to human which they called Θεος, God; Θειον, divinity, deity; Θειον τι, something divine; το ον, the being, &c. and they thought a man might as well deny the being of the sun, as the existence of such a deity. Qui dubitet, haud sane intelligo, cur non idem sol sit, an nullus sit, dubitare possit.*

2. The contracted minds of the pagans could not admit the grand idea of one infinitely just, infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and all present God. In one sensible object they discovered a particular display of wisdom, in another of power; in one event they perceived a mark of more than human justice, in another of more than human goodness; but not being able to form an abstract idea of wisdom, justice, goodness, or power, they *divided* their obscure idea of divinity into endless ideas of displays of it, and what we call an attribute of God, they called a god, with the addition of a form, and thus their Θεος was broken and dispersed into Θεοι, *gods*. Hesiod talks of three myriads, or thirty thousand of these deities.

Τρεις γαρ μυριοι εισιν, &c.†

* Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. ii. cap. 2. edit. Duv. † Hesiodiop. et dier. i. 250.

3. The pagans, having accustomed themselves to consider divinity under a form, and to circumscribe it in an action, added demons and heroes to the number of deities, and in general called the whole multitude θεοι, *gods*, distinguishing them however from *men*. Hence Aristotle exhorts his rhetorician to distinguish what he affirms of a *god* from what he affirms of a *man*; Η ανθρωπου η θεου ταυτο ουδεν εργον.* A priestess, says he, would not suffer her son to declaim in public to the people, because, said she, if you inculcate just maxims, ανθρωποι, *men*, will hate you, and if you teach unjust ones, θεοι, the *gods*, will abhor you. The priestess, adds he, might as well have said, declaim in public, for, if you inculcate just maxims, θεοι, the *gods*, will love you, and if unjust ones, ανθρωποι, *men*, will respect you.†

4. The pagans, having an idea of order, and unity of design, in nature; and supposing that order could not be maintained without government, and that the best kind of government was monarchical (I speak of the earlier Greeks) imagined such a government among the gods, and attributed *supremacy* to one, whom they called Jupiter; hence Homer's Πατηρ ανδρων τε θεων τε,‡ *father* of gods and men. Hence Orpheus,

> Ζευς πρωτος γενετο, Ζευς υστατος αρχικεραυνος.
> Ζευς κεφαλη, Ζευς μεσσα, Διος δ' εκ παντα τετυκται.
> Ζευς πυθμην γαιης τε και ουρανου αστεροεντος.
> Ος εστ' αρρην θηλυς γαμος αθανατων μακαρων τε.
> Ζευς πνοιη παντεσσι, Ζευς ενεργεα παντα τελευτα.
> Ζευς πυρ, Ζευς υδωρ, Ζευς ηελιος και σεληνη.
> Ζευς βασιλευς, Ζευς αυτος απασης γενετωρ αρχης.§

*Tyrant* of heaven and hell, of earth and sea! &c.

Hence Aristophanes, Ω Ζευ βασιλευ. O Jupiter, *king*, &c.‖

From this popular notion Isocrates derives an argument for monarchical government, Τους θεους υπο του Διος βασιλευεσθαι.¶ We ought to prefer a monarchy before a republic, says he, because, according to our own conjectures, and according to an ancient opinion, the gods prefer a monarchy, and Jove is their king.

5. All the terms, which the pagans use of God, express two or three general ideas. Sometimes they are put for an

* Arist. Rhetor. lib. ii. cap. 23. † ibid. lib. ii. cap. 24. ‡ Homerus passim. § Poet min. Orph. b. 1, 2, 3. ‖ Nub. v. 2. ¶ Orat. 3. ad Nicoc.

obscure notion of what we call deity, unoriginated and eternal; sometimes for what we call an attribute of God; and sometimes for an operation or influence, that governs an event. Having no clear idea of these things, they used their terms in a vague and indiscriminate manner. Longinus uses θειος, θειον, and δαιμονιον promiscuously.* Aristotle says, Δαιμονιον εδεν εστιν, αλλ' η θεος, η θεου εργον.† Socrates was accused to the Athenians of not worshipping the gods, θεους, which the city worshipped, and of introducing new deities, δαιμονια; and Xenophon clears him from the charge by proving that he did sacrifice both abroad and at home to the city *gods*, and consequently, that he did introduce no new δαιμονια. He uses the terms δαιμονιον and θεος promiscuously.‡

6. The apostles used the term θεος in the same sense, in which the heathens used it; that is, they expressed by it the idea of a creative, governing being superior to man. By giving it to one, and to one only, they collected all the pagan notions of wisdom, power, justice, and goodness, into one general idea, and affixed that idea to one single object. By asserting the spirituality and invisibility of the Deity, they refined the idea of θεος from whatever of the gross and the human the heathens had mixed with it. When St. Paul went to Athens, he saw the city *wholly given to idolatry;* he saw an altar inscribed to *the unknown God*, Αγνωστω θεω; and, addressing himself to these idolaters, he said, ON ον αγνοουντες ευσεβατε, WHOM *ye ignorantly worship*, TOYTON εγω καταγγελλω υμιν, HIM *I declare unto you.* GOD, *who made the world*, and so on. He quoted the poet Aratus, who speaking of the heathen JUPITER, says, *We are* HIS *offspring*, and added, *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of* GOD, *we ought not to think that the* GODHEAD *is like unto gold;* and so on.§

The same apostle went along with Barnabas to Lystra. The people said, *the* θεοι, the *Gods, Jupiter and Mercury, are come down to us in in the likeness of men.* The apostles replied, *We preach to you, Sirs! that we should turn from these vanities unto* the θεον ζωντα, *the living God.*‖ The same St. Paul

* De Sublim. sect. ix. † Rhetor. lib. ii. cap. 24. ‡ Xenoph. Memorab. lib. i. § Acts xvii. ‖ ibid. xiv.

says to the Corinthians ; the pagans have θεοι *gods many,* and κυριοι, *lords many : but to us* christians *there is but one* θεος *and one* κυριος.*

7. The heathens understood, that the biblical writers used the terms, in the same sense, in which they theirselves used them, that is, in the general sense, which has been mentioned. Longinus considered Homer and Moses speaking of the same being, whom he calls θειον, δειμονιον, δαιμονιαι; θεος, θεοι. This critic thought Moses's θεος synonimous to Homer's Διδωνευς, Ποσειδαων.†

Let us now apply these remarks to the subject in hand, the divinity of Jesus Christ. We will suppose the revelation of St. John to fall into the hands of a pagan, and we will give him the first chapter to consider. Three things we select, 1. The circumstances attending the vision. 2. The titles given to the person, who appeared. 3. The foretelling of events, that were to happen.

1. The *circumstances.* The vision is introduced with a *thunder-clap,* called a voice of a great trumpet ; Signa venisse *Deum.*‡ The heathens introduced their *deities* in like manner.

——Iterum atque iterum fragor intonat ingens.

———Troïus heros

*Agnovit sonitum,* et divæ promissa parentis.§

Jupiter was accounted the thunderer by excellence.‖ Octavius dedicated a temple to him at Rome under that title.¶ And from the common notion that thunder indicated the presence of a God, Horace took occasion to pay this fine compliment to Augustus,

Cœlo tonantem credidimus Jovem
Regnare : præsens divus habebitur
Augustus, adjectis Britannis
Imperio, gravibusque Persis, &c.*

The same may be said of the other circumstances, and a pagan, having read these circumstances, would naturally expect the descent τιν θεου.

* 1 Cor. viii. † Long. Sub. sect. ix. ‡ Ovid. Metam. Lib. i. Fab. vi. l. 58. § Virg. Æneid. Lib. viii. 527, &c. ‖ Cic. de Div. 2. ¶ Sueton. in Vit. Octav. 29. * Horat. Carm. Lib. iii. Ode 5.

2. The *titles* given to the person, who appeared. The writer calls him ο ων,* answering exactly to Plato's το ον,† *the being*, αυλιον απειρατον, the cause of all things. The person appearing is called ο ων, ο ην, ο ερχομενος, a being, *who is, who was, who is to come.* The pagans had applied similar titles to their *deities*, and had inscribed them on the portals of some of their temples.‡

The writer calls the person appearing, ο Παντοκρατωρ; ο κυριος; ο αρχων των βασιλεων της γης; το Α, και το Ω; αρχη και τελος; ο πρωτος και ο εσχατος; ο ξων εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων. By all which titles a pagan who had not been previously taught that he must not think so, would undoubtedly have understood that the writer was describing the descent of a *god.*

3. The *foretelling of events.* He, who appeared commanded the writer, Γραψον α . . . μελλει γινεσθαι μετα ταυτα. The pagans pretended to predict future events; but they distinguished between the foresight of an event, and the means, by which they obtained their foreknowledge of it. The latter, they thought, were the entrails of beasts, the flying of birds, and so on; the former they ascribed to God. Efficit in avibus *divina mens*, says Cicero; quod bellum susceptum sine *consilio deorum* est?§ The same distinction was made by the Greeks. Socrates, and others, thought θεους δια τουτων αυτα σημαινειν.‖

To these remarks we might add another on the *symbols*, that are mentioned, such as the KEYS, του αδου και του θανατου; which the pagans had assigned to Pluto,¶ or Hades, ειτε θεος, ειτε δαιμων, says Plutarch, &c. but the former are sufficient to prove that a pagan must have understood the writer as speaking of a *God.* I do not ask the reader to grant that Jesus is hereby proved to be the *supreme* God; I only ask him to allow, that a heathen would have thought St. John was speaking of a nature more than human, a celestial God, a terrestrial god, a demon, a deified hero, if he will; and this being granted, which cannot be denied, I reason thus. The writer was inspired, and he expressed his idea in terms the best

* Rev. i. 8. † In Timæo et Epist. ii. 5. ‡ Euseb. Prepar. xi. 10. Plut. de Iside et Osiride. § De divinatione. ‖ Zenoph. Memorab. i. 1. ¶ Diodor. Sic. Lib. v.

known, and the most proper to convey his own meaning. A heathen, who had an obscure idea of God, taking the terms in their unforced sense, received from them an idea of a deity. Jesus is therefore a deity of some class. If Jesus be a deity at all, he is the one Supreme God, for the writer held the unity of God, and intended to refine the ideas of the heathen, to collect them into one, and to give him that one as a true image of Jesus Christ the Archetype.

In vain, after these reflections, does one critic prefer *one* ancient reading before *many* other ancient readings;* in vain does another change λεσανλι into λυσαντος;† or λεσανλι into λυσανλι;‡ in vain does a third complain of solecisms;§ our reflections stand independent on them; they arise from the face of the passage; and our idea is a general effect produced by a combination of terms, which all allow to be the original writing of the apostle. It signifies nothing to say, St. John did not mean to describe the *supreme* God by these names; the ascription of them to Jesus can never be justified, if Jesus be, as some say, a *mere man*, for the language is nothing less than a snare to entangle men in idolatry. The writer ought not to have given even a shadow of a pretence for mistaking a *man* for *god*. That severe critic, Le Clerc, has granted what I ask; Græci θειον seu θεον vocabant PRÆSTANTIOREM NATURAM HUMANA.‖ I ask no more at present.

Page 15. *Compare the style of the new Testament with the state of the Jews at the time of its publication.* To illustrate this article we make the following remarks.

1. The Jews emigrated from Egypt under the conduct of Moses. Jewish and heathen historians both affirm this emigration¶.

2. The Jews worshipped the one living and true God. *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.** Judæi mente sola,

* Rev. Mr. Lindsey's Apology, p. 130. † Ibid. ‡ Dr. Mill, whose criticism is proved to be futile by Blackwall, Sac. Classics, vol. ii. § Vid. Poli Synopsis in Apoc. i. 5, 6. where Erasmus and others are refuted on this article. ‖ Clerici ars Crit. p. 2. s. 1. c. 3. ¶ Justini Hist. xxxvi. 2. * Deut. vi. 4.

*unum* que *numen* intelligunt. Profanos, qui deum imagines mortalibus materiis, in species hominum effingant. Summum illud et eternum, neque mutabile, neque interiturum.*

Nil præter nubes, et cœli *numen* adorant.†

Juvenal either alludes to *the pillar of a cloud* in the Jewish history, or borrows a piece of ridicule of Aristophanes. ‡

3. Some of the Jewish nation had extraordinary revelations of their God. The Jews pretended to these, and the heathens durst not deny them. Nihil divini juris humani que ei (i. e. Josepho.) incognitum videbatur; adeo ut etiam sterilitatem agrorum ante multos annos provideret, perisset que omnis Egyptus fame, nisi monitu ejus rex edicto servari per multos annos fruges jussisset; tantaque experimenta ejus fuerunt, ut non ab homine, sed a *deo* responsa dari viderentur. Filius ejus Moses fuit, quem *præter paternæ scientiæ hereditatem* etiam formæ pulchritudo commendabat.§

4. Moses committed his ideas of God and religion to writing. *Moses*, quo sibi in posterum gentem firmaret, *novos ritus*, contrariosque ceteris mortalibus *indidit*. ‖

Tradidit arcano quodcunque *volumine* Moses.¶

5. The Mosaic code of laws, including the genealogies of the familes in the kingdom, the laws of the state, the ceremonies of religion, and several other articles of constant use to the whole body of the nation, was preserved with the utmost care by the Jews. The book was their philosophy, their divinity, their history, their policy, their all; and they paid an attention to it corresponding to its importance. Hi ritus, quoquo modo inducti, *antiquitate defenduntur;* cætera instituta sinistra, fœda, pravitate valuere.*

Quidem sortiti metuentem sabbata patrem,
Nil præter nubes, et cœli numen adorant;
Nec distare putant humana carne suillam,
Qua pater abstinuit: mox et præputia ponunt:
Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges,
*Judaicum ediscunt*, et *servant* ac *metuunt jus*,

* Tacit. Hist. v. 5. † Juven. Sat. xiv. 97. ‡ From the comedy of the clouds. § Just. Hist. xxxvi. 2. ‖ Tacit. Hist. v. 4. ¶ Juven. Sat. xiv. 102. * Tacit. Hist. v. 5.

Tradidit arcano quodcunque volumine Moses.*

Eosdem reges et sacerdotes haberent; quorum *justitia religione permixta*, incredibile quantum coaluere.†

6. The inspired writings of the Jews are come down to us free from any mistakes, that affect their general meaning. "A great number of various readings, interpolations, luxations, omissions, transpositions, and the like, have crept into the text; but they are all of such a nature, as neither to affect the *essentials* of religion, nor the authenticity of the christian revelation."‡

7. The Supreme Being, although he is described in the Jewish scriptures by several names, which, being vague and indeterminate, are applied to inferior natures, is yet described by one name, which is incommunicable to creatures; and those names, which we call vague, are rendered so distinct by the construction of the passages, in which they occur, that there is no danger of mistaking their meaning. The number of these names is ten.§

8. The name JEHOVAH, which the Jews call the ineffable, incommunicable name of God, was a name, which, agreeably to the authoritative claim of God, ‖ was never given to creatures. The Jews respected this name even to superstition; they never pronounced it; they always wrote another name instead of it; they denounced terrible anathemas against all, who should venture to utter it; they even believed, that the angels were not allowed to sound it; they preserved the name entire to God, and generally called it τετραγραμματον, *the name of four letters*.¶ The heathens adopted their language, and swore by τον τετρακτυν.*

9. The Jews reasoned, that as the names אל, and אלהים, no where occurred in precepts for sacrificing: but, on the contrary, the incommunicable name [יהוה] was invariably inser-

* Juven. Sat. ubi supra. † Just. ubi supra. Grot. de Veritat. Rel. Christ. i. 14. ‡ Dissert. on the canons necessary for the right and accurate Interp. of the New Test. p. 67. 68. Clerici Ars Crit. Passim. § Hieron. Epist, 136 ad Marcel. ‖ Exod. iii. 13, &c. ¶ Drus. de Nom. Tetrag. cap. x. Joseph. Antiq. ii. 5. * Pythag. Aur. Carm. Selden de Diis Syris. Syntag. ii. cap. i.

ted by the legislator; it was clearly indicated, that whatever honours they might pay to creatures, who were sometimes called *Elohim*, they might not offer sacrifices to any, but to the most high God, the Creator. In copiosa sacrificiorum descriptione nusquam occurit nec אל nec אלהים sed INEFFABILE NOMEN τετραγραμματον, QUOD EST DEI PROPRIUM . . usurpatur vocabulum DEI PRÆPOTENTIS PROPRIUM, quo manifestum fieret RERUM CREATORI, non numini commentitio sacrificari, &c.*

Collecting these facts, entering by them into the genius of the Jewish nation, and endeavouring to think and speak like an ancient Jew, in order to find out his meaning; we put the forecited first chapter of Revelation, written by a *Jew*, into the hands of a *Jewish* reader, and we think it clear to a demonstration, that the circumstances, the titles, and the prophecy, contained in that chapter, excite the idea of Jehovah.

The circumstance of *thunder*, that of falling at the feet of the speaker *as dead*, and others similar, would certainly have afforded a Jew a presumption that the vision was a vision of God. The description of the speaker is evidently taken from the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the ANCIENT OF DAYS is described by the prophet; no Jewish writer would have described any but God in this manner, and, if one had been found so negligent, every Jewish reader would soon have detected him. But, to omit all the other evidences for brevity sake, we will remark only one title given to the speaker.

The Jews, it is well known, having lost the use of their pure native Hebrew tongue, had a Greek translation of their bible in high repute among them. The new testament writers all quoted scripture from this translation.† All the Greek churches, to whom St. John wrote, had no other copy. The translators of this Greek bible had rendered the incommunicable name ουω. The Lord said to Moses, Εγω ειμι ουω. The person appearing to St. John quotes this passage, and says, Εγω ειμι . . . . . ουω, ὁ ων, ὁ ην, ὁ ἐρχομενος. Imagine a Jew under the awe of these prohibitions and declamations, *thou shalt not take the*

* Rab. Abarbanelis Exord. Comment. in Levit. caput iv. De Sacrif. fine. † Walton. Prolegom. Prideaux Connect. b. i, p. 2.

NAME *of Jehovah thy God in vain . . for is my name* FOR EVER, *and my memorial unto all generations; I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to* ANOTHER, *neither my praise to graven images.** Imagine, I say, a *Jewish writer* putting this name into the mouth of his hero in order to excite in a *Jewish reader* the idea of a mere creature, if you can. The carnal Jews thought Jesus a mere man; the converted Jews thought him God. The latter took the sacred titles of Jehovah and gave them to Jesus; and the former have hated them with a cruel hatred for it, and have persecuted them as blasphemers of the God of heaven for almost eighteen hundred years.

Page 18. *Compare the perfections, which are ascribed to Jesus Christ in the new testament, with those, which are ascribed to God in the old.*

They, who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, consider this article as sophistical, and perpetually exclaim; "it is *ignoratio elenchi;* we deny to Jesus Christ no other attributes than those, which are INCOMMUNICABLE, and of these you can never prove Jesus Christ in possession."

Let us endeavour to understand one another, and let us go deep enough, that we may fairly and clearly see on what we build.

1. God is a simple uncompounded *spirit.*

2. Our idea of God is *complex,* made up of many simple ideas obtained by reflection.

3. The difference of our idea of the Supreme Spirit, God, and our ideas of other spirits, lies in the idea of *infinity,* which goes to make up our complex notion of God; but which is excluded from our complex notions of other spirits. Were it allowable to join the idea of infinity to our other ideas, which compose our complex notion of a created spirit, we should confound the idea of a creature with that of the Creator, and there would remain no certain rule to distinguish the independent self-existent cause from other spirits. The *divinity* of an attribute therefore lies in its infinity.

4. Strictly speaking there are not several perfections or at-

* Exod. xx. 7. iii. 15. Isa. xlii. 8.

tributes in God; but there is *one general excellence*, inclusive of all perfections: when therefore we form an idea of one divine attribute as distinct from another divine attribute, we form an idea, which hath no real archetype; it is only a peculiar mode of thinking, which the immensity of the object, and the narrow limits of the mind render necessary. If then I can find a being, who possesseth what I call one divine attribute, I may assure myself that he possesseth all divine attributes, or, more strictly speaking, that he hath that general excellence, of which I speak, that is to say, he is God.

5. It implies a contradiction to affirm that God can *communicate* a divine, that is, an infinite perfection, to a creature; for, on such a supposition, the idea of finite, which distinguishes a creature from God, would be absorbed and lost in the idea of infinity, which distinguishes God from every other spirit; and I could then affirm all of the creature that I could affirm of God. It may be said, no; in the supposed case, the supreme cause hath an underived, independent excellence, and the divine creature hath only a derived, communicated excellence; the first cause hath not communicated his self-existence, and on that account he is supreme, and the other subordinate. My answer should be taken from the foregoing self-evident truth. I would say, there is no such thing in nature as one divine attribute distinct from another divine attribute; and when you have proved, that he, whom you call a divine creature, possesseth what you call one divine attribute, you have thereby proved, that he possesseth that general excellence, which constitutes the nature of God, and consequently independence and self-existence.

6. There is (if I may express my meaning so) a REAL and a RELATIVE infinity. Real infinity belongs to God alone. Relative infinity may belong to one creature in regard to another. I possess an infinity of ideas in regard to my canary-bird; and an angel possesseth an infinity of wisdom in regard to me: but all infinity, relative or real, is consistent with the nature of the being in question. If I suppose, an angel hath an extent of duration and thought beyond human, I suppose an expansion suited to his nature; but were I to suppose an

angel present at two places at one and the same time, I should either destroy my idea of an angel, or I should suppose an impossibility, incongruous with his really finite nature, and with that of every other creature: ubiquity is real infinity, and the infinite spirit alone can say, *do not I fill heaven and earth?**

7. The idea of *ubiquity* is affixed in all the old testament to Jehovah. It is mentioned as a real infinity, gloriously proper and peculiar to him alone. It is not an ubiquity of works, and of fame, *covering the heavens with his glory, and filling the earth with his praise.*† It is an ubiquity of presence, real, influential, and incomprehensible. A science *too wonderful for* us; *it is high, we can* neither deny it, *nor attain unto it.*‡

8. The writers of the new testament excite the idea of ubiquity, and affix it to *Jesus Christ.* The man Jesus is not capable of ubiquity; if, therefore, infallible writers ascribe ubiquity to him, they must mean to ascribe to him a nature superior to human, superior to angelic; they must mean that he is, what they elsewhere call him, God. If the fact be established, the inference will follow.

John the baptist says, *the only begotten Son, who* STANDETH *among you,* IS *in the bosom of the Father.*§ Jesus Christ tells Nicodemus, *the son of man, who* CAME DOWN *from heaven,* IS *in heaven.*‖ But, say our opponents, *Attici gaudent participiis;* here is *enallege temporis.* We beg leave to reply by three remarks.

1. The question is, not whether Attic poets and orators wrote thus: but whether the grave founders of the christian church, speaking of the *person of Christ,* an article of the utmost importance, and which he, who inspired them, knew would be extremely litigated, and where the writers' designs were more to give distinct ideas than pleasing sounds; not whether these writers used the several dialects and the several figures of speech in other places, but whether *St. John* used them in *these* two passages. We are not obliged to allow that he did. When one phrase of St. John's makes for the deity

* Jer. xxiii. 24. † Hab. iii. 3. ‡ Psa. cxxxix. 6. § John i. 15. 18. 26. ‖ Ibid. iii. 13.

of Christ, it is either a solecism, or it is Greek-Hebrew; when another phrase of the same writer makes for the deity of Christ, it is oratorical elegance, it is an Atticism!

2. The Greeks, had, in general, participles for every tense of a verb, by which they avoided a confusion of time, and used their participles as distinctly as the tenses of their verbs. "Every complete verb, says an accurate writer, is expressive of an *attribute;* of *time;* and of an *assertion*. Now if we take away the *assertion*, and thus destroy the *verb*, there will remain the *attribute* and the *time*, which makes the essence of a *participle*."* According to this St. John attributed *existence* to Christ in two places at the same *time*.

3. The scope of these places does not require a figurative sense to be affixed to the terms. St. John was writing the history of one, whom he called *God*. Ubiquity belongs to the history of God. John the baptist was speaking of Jehovah, before whom he went. Ubiquity belongs to Jehovah. After the writer had given notice that he spoke of one, who *was with God, and was God*, ought we to be surprized if he ascribed a perfection of God to him!

*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there* AM I *in the midst of them.*† I AM *with you alway even unto the end of the world.*‡

The fulfilment of these promises is impossible without the perfection of ubiquity. Mr. Le Clerc's sense of the first is false in fact, and he grounds that falshood on a violent misconstruction. The meaning seems plainly this. The old testament œconomy was supported by the influence and presence of *God; so* shall the new testament dispensation be. God promised his *presence* to the Jews when he gave the *laws* of their church; I promise *mine* to christians, now I am giving the *laws* of their churches. The Jews understood their promise of the real influence and presence of Jehovah; it was neither the presence of reason, nor of revelation merely: but it was the all-pervading, all-impressive influence of the Supreme Spirit; I speak in popular style; understand me so. The Jews have a common saying, *where two or three are met to study the*

* Hermes, b. i. c. 10. † Matt. xviii. 20. ‡ xxviii. 20.

*law, there is the Shekinah among them;** you christians shall say, *where two or three are gathered together in* Christ's *name, there* is he *in the midst of them.* You are my *body*, and you shall be animated with *the fulness of* me, who *fill all in all.*†

The reverend Mr, Lindsey says, "that the Lord Jesus is intrusted with a mighty extensive power and dominion for the good of his church and people, is plainly and expressly revealed to us, Matt. xxviii. 18. 20. John xiv, &c. How and in what manner he exerciseth this power is wholly unrevealed, and therefore unsearchable by us, as much as the way and manner of God's providence, under which Christ acteth, and which superintends and over-rules all things."‡

So then! This scheme does not answer its end; like ours it proposes some articles to the belief of its professors, which it does not condescend to explain. I give, however, the preference to the old system of Christ's divinity, because, while it requires me to believe the *mighty dominion* of Jesus, it *reveals* his godhead, and so accounts for his exercise of it: whereas the new scheme of his mere humanity gives him a dominion in all worlds, while it confines his person and presence, and consequently his influence, to one place, and so leaves his government, not only unsearchable and unrevealed, but absolutely impossible. The believer of Christ's divinity speaks consistently: he says, the man Jesus is in one place at one time; but the deity united to the man fills heaven and earth. The believer of Christ's mere humanity says, the man Jesus is confined to one place at one time, yet he exerciseth a dominion over all places at the same time; and when we ask, *how can these things be?* we are told, they are *unrevealed and unsearchable.* Who believes mysteries now! Whose faith is fitted to transubstantiation now!

If the divinity of Jesus be allowed, we can believe, that he, *whom the heavens* retain *until the times of the restitution of all things,* § *stood by Paul at the castle at Jerusalem;* ‖ that he, who, *after he had offered one sacrifice for sin,* FOR EVER SAT DOWN *on the right hand of God,* ¶ APPEARED *unto* Saul *to*

* Poli Synops. in loc. † Eph. i. 23. ‡ Apol. p. 136. § Acts iii. 21. ‖ Ibid. xxiii. 10, 11. ¶ Heb. x. 12.

*make* him *a witness both of the things, which he had seen, and of the things in which he* WOULD APPEAR again unto him.* Now I understand how he can be *present* with his apostles in heaven, and with their successors on earth;† *making war* upon the wicked on earth, while *he appears in the presence of God*, making intercession *for us*.‡

Page 22. *Compare the works of Jesus with the claims of Jehovah.*

1. Had I been born a Canadian savage, I should certainly have thought, that the GREAT SPIRIT CREATED the world.§ Had I been born a Greenlander, I should have said, "My kajak did not make itself. More skill is displayed in the structure of the meanest bird, than in that of the best kajak, and more still in that of man than in the composition of either. Certainly there must be some Being, who MADE all these things, a Being that always was, and can never cease to be."‖

2. These dictates of nature, ideas of a creating first cause, obtained by sensation and reflection, I find to have been the ideas of civilized heathens.

Deus . . . et Natura . . .
Quisquis fuit ille deorum
Cœlo terras, et terris abscidit undas,
Et liquidum spisso secrevit ab aere cœlum.¶

Εις δ' ες' αυτογενης ενθεν εκγονα παντα τελυκται.*

3. The inspired oracles of Judaism preserve and refine, expand and explain these ideas. Job the Arabian prince, and David the royal prophet, Solomon the wisest, and Amos the meanest of mankind, unite in saying to me, *seek him, who maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: who calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out on the face of the earth, the* LORD *is his name*.†

* Acts xxvi. 16. † 2 Cor. v. 8. Matt. xxviii. 20. ‡ Rev. xix. 11. Heb. ix. 24. § Charlevoix's Voyage to Canada, Let. xxiii. ‖ Crantz's Hist. of Greenland, vol. i. b. iii. c. 5. ¶ Ovidii Metam. i. 1. 1. 17. 2. 1. &c. * Orpheus ap. Just. de Monarch Clem. Alex. Strom. v. † Amos. v. 8.

4. The new testament confirms me yet more, if possible. It tells me, *the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.* What invisible objects does a Creator prove by creating? *His* own *eternal power and Godhead.* St. Paul's CREATOR is *the incorruptible God,* who is to be *worshipped and served,* and who is *God blessed for ever.** Yet this same St. Paul affirms, *all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible,* were CREATED *by Jesus Christ, and for him.*† The divinity of Jesus may be rested on this article alone. St. Paul's decision is final; *he, who made all things, is God.*‡

5. There is no way of getting over this evidence. If some form a creed, and say, the new testament ascribes to Jesus only a *figurative* creation by the gospel; Dr. Clarke will reply, *nothing can be more forced and unnatural than such an interpretation.*§ If others say, the Father first created Christ, and then empowered Christ to create the universe; we reply, create the universe who would, *he, who created all things is God.* In vain they talk of a subordinate instrumental god, the Creator himself denies the idea. *Thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens; God himself, that formed the earth; I am the Lord and there is none else. Is there a God beside me? Yea there is no God, I know not any.*‖ I the *Lord made all things, I stretched forth the heavens* ALONE. *I spread abroad the earth* BY MYSELF.¶ Reduce my Creator to a creature who can, make creeds who will, my faith shall never be circumscribed within the narrow dreary dens of their words, it shall soar in the wide expanse of divine revelation.

Nescit enim Cæsar, (quamvis deus omnia norit)
Ultimus hic qua sit conditione locus.
Magna tenent illud numen molimina rerum;
Hæc est cœlesti pectore cura minor.*
Qui gentes omnes, mariaque, et terras movet,
Ejus sum civis civitate cœlitum.†

* Rom. i. 20. 23, 24. † Col. i. 16. ‡ Heb. iii. 4. § Script. Doct. N. 550. ‖ Isa. xlv. 18. xliv. 8. ¶ Isa. xliv. 24. * Ovid. de Pont. El. iii. † Plaut. de Rudente Prol.

Page 26. *The scriptures claim religious worship for Jesus Christ.*

1. By Jesus Christ in this article I mean the Godhead that united itself to the man, whom we commonly call Jesus. The man is not deified by this union, consequently the manhood is entitled to no religious worship. The humanity is, so to speak, the temple in which the deity dwells.

2. The scriptures distinguish *civil* respect from *religious* homage; but it knows nothing of supreme and subordinate religious worship.

3. Religious worship supposes its object in possession of all those inconceivable perfections, which constitute the eminent *greatness* of the Supreme Being. The scriptures ascribe this eminence to Jesus. In Christ dwelleth ALL *the fulness* of the Godhead bodily.

4. Religious worship supposes its object displaying all those communications, which constitute the eminent *goodness* of the Supreme Being. The scriptures ascribe those communications to Jesus. He is the Creator, the Preserver, the Redeemer, the felicity of mankind.

5. Religious worship supposes its object holding and exercising universal empire. The scriptures ascribe universal empire to Jesus. He reigns over heaven, and earth, and hell.

6. Right to religious worship is incommunicable, because supreme greatness, supreme goodness, and supreme empire, the grounds and reasons of worship, are incommunicable. When we suppose these excellencies in any being, we have obtained an idea of what we call God, and that of a creature is lost. The communication of Godhead is impossible in the nature of things; it would be to make that, which had a beginning, have no beginning, and so on. Worship is action founded on reason; when the reason is absent, the action must not appear.

7. God, who has a natural right to the worship of his creatures, may *acquire*, and does actually acquire, new rights to that worship every day by his exuberant goodness in favour of his worshippers. It is no objection therefore to Christ's *natural* rights, that he hath acquired by his beneficent acts in our favour new rights. We *bow the knee* to him as well be-

cause of his natural dignity, as because *he tasted death for every man.*

8. Jesus Christ is worshipped by those celestial intelligences, who, having never sinned, derived no salvation from him; and who, being of an order superior to the human, could derive no protection, much less creation, from a nature lower than their own. Their worship therefore, is founded on his deity. What odd propositions are these? Jesus Christ is a mere man. Jesus Christ created angels. That is to say, a creature created creatures more excellent than *himself.*

2. When it is objected to us, all power is *given* to Jesus, therefore he is *not* God: We reply, all power is given to Jesus, therefore he is God. We prove our conclusion thus. The gift of all power in heaven and earth either means, in the sense of our opponents, the gift of an empire to govern, or the gift of ability to govern it. The first alone is impracticable, the last is impossible. The gift of empire, without the gift of ability, is the putting of a sceptre into the hand of an infant. The gift of ability is impossible; for the exercise of ALL *power in heaven and in earth* requires an infinity of perfections; the governor of all worlds must be in all worlds at the same time; he must maintain the order of his empire by an universal all pervading action, by an ubiquity proper to God, and incommunicable to creatures. The word *give* is equivocal. Our opponents take it for the *conferring* of a right: we take it for the *acknowledgement* of a right. The word δίδωμι is very vague, and wo be to the system, that rests on its precise etymology. What a fine inference is this! Magistrates *give glory and strength, and worship unto Jehovah;* therefore Jehovah is not God; at most he is only a subordinate God; for he *derives* glory from magistrates! *All power is given to me,* said our Redeemer; that is, all heaven *allow* what the Jews deny, that I am *Lord of all.* The Father hath *given me power over all flesh;* that is, the Father *allows* and *approves* of my right as God, and he has *constituted* the display of it in me, Jesus, the man.

10. It is asked, if Jesus be God, why did he say no more about it? We answer, Jesus never expressly said, he was the Messiah in Judea; when people enquired, he referred them to his *works.* If Jesus be God, we can shew a reason why he

said no more: if he be only a mere man, our opponents can shew no reason why he said so much.

Page 50. *Some of the scribes pretend, that he who sent Moses was a created angel.*

1. The doctrine of foreappearances is to be determined by scripture alone; we must *compare spiritual things with spiritual.* The opinions of men are only counsel on both sides of the question.

2. The opinions of men are very much divided on this article; however, all are reducible to three. In the first class we put those, who thought the person appearing either a created angel, or the pre-existent human soul of Jesus Christ. The first is an ancient opinion of some Jews, the last is a modern comment of some christians. The same objections lie against both. The appearance took the name, by which the Supreme Being was distinguished, and suffered himself to be worshipped, contrary to the practice of appearing angels, who said to those, who would have worshipped them, *see ye do it not, we are your fellow-servants; worship God.**

In a second class I put Maimonides, Augustine, Hilary, Ambrose, Bishop Patrick, and others, who thought the appearance God.† The Jews thought him Jehovah simply, the christian commentators thought him Jehovah-Jesus. If I have adopted this opinion, it is because I think this has fewest difficulties, and most evidences; and if I have put it into the mouth of John, it is because I perceive it was the opinion of Stephen, and therefore an opinion known in John's age, and, if the true one, probably received by him. *The prophet like Moses was in the church in the wilderness with the angel, who spake to Moses in Mount Sinai,* &c ‡ However, the force of the argument stands independent on John, although not on Stephen.

A third class of interpreters take the appearance for, I know not what, delegated created god. A strange unnatural idea, invented, it should seem, to get rid of a difficulty in the history. A poor exchange, a mystery for an impossibility!

* Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 9. † More Nevoc. p. ii. cap. 42. Pat. in Gen. xxxv. 1. xxxi. 3. Vide Pelarg. in Exod. iii. 6. ‡ Acts vii. 38.

The opinions of uninspired men, as we have said, are respectable as advice, but not as law. The great difficulty is taken from St. John, who calls Jesus Christ λογος.* He says, λογος was with the Father in the beginning, and created the world. Now some writers had spoken of a λογος, as a kind of secondary god, before St. John's time. The question is, did he use the word in their meaning? Mr. Le Clerc asks,† did Plato take the word in the sense of St. John; or did St. John take it in the sense of Plato? We reply, neither. We account for the matter thus.

1. Some of the ancient Jews, not caring to deny the divinity of the appearance, nor daring to apply what was said of him to a man or an angel, left the matter. He was God; he was God's chief angel or messenger; quis ille esset vere intelligere Moses et Israelitæ non potuerunt.‡ They could not tell is a fact: therefore Moses could not, is not a fair conclusion.

2. Some of the ancient Jews, catching the idea of *speaking* or *revealing* the will of God, which was the end of the appearing, ventured to call the appearance מימרא, the *word* of the Lord, and hence, probably, the *word of God* became an idiom for *God*.§

3. The Jews, who lived out of Judea, translated the term into the Greek tongue, and the person, who appeared, obtained the name of λογος. The term logos, while it retained its original Jewish idea, was determinate and proper; it stood for that singular being God the medium, that great supreme, whose manner of existence was unknown, and who would some time appear in the likeness of a man to redeem mankind. Chaldæo Paraph. *Messias* Verbum Dei dicitur. Hos. vii. ||

4. The term Memra, not signifying merely Jehovah, but Jehovah under the peculiar idea of holding communion with men, by appearing in the form of a man, was adopted by the Targumists, or Chaldee paraphrasts. These paraphrases were

* John i. † Ars Crit. de Sectar. Sermone, 1. 2. 1. 14. ‡ Rabbi Moses Nehem. fil. apud Grot de Verit. v. 21. § Prideaux's Connect. ii. chap. 8. || Grot. ubi supra.

in the common dialect of the Jews in the time of Jesus Christ.* They were read in the synagogues as explanatory of the text, which was read first in Hebrew. Jesus Christ expressed the first verse of the twenty-second psalm, when he hung upon the cross, not in the Hebrew words of the text, but in the Chaldee paraphrase of it. The apostles often adopted their style, and St. John took the word λογος from those books, retaining in it only its old idea.

5. Plato, who travelled into Egypt to improve his knowledge, learnt the Jewish notion of Memra, or logos, and, affixing ideas to the term, of which the ancient Jews had never thought, returned it to the Jews, in his writings, full of dark, pagan, enigmatical ideas. All things were new except the term. It was Moses Atticised indeed!†

6. It became fashionable in time for men of science to speak and think as Plato spoke and thought; and Philo the Jew, and after him many christian divines, took up the *Platonic* logos, and thus brought the *Memra* of the old Targumists, and the *logos* of St. John, into obscurity and disgrace, although it does not appear that St. John knew any thing about Plato's ideas of it.

7. Nothing is more common than to run mad for a term, without examining its value. The history of this terms proves that it has had different values in different hands; it has gone for more or less, as the exigencies of its owners required.‡ As St. John used it, it stood for God, who forcappeared to the patriarchs, and gave the law to Moses. It described a divine human being, anciently known to the Jews by the name of Jehovah Memra, and since to the world by the name Jesus.

I must check, I perceive, this lawless pen, and I will conclude with one article more.

Page 84. *Happy for christians, had they rested without philosophical explications!*

I have not attempted to EXPLAIN THE MANNER of the divine existence. I do not know it. Wise and good men have uttered many absurdities in attempting to explain it;

* Gill's Preface to New Test. Exp. † Valerius Maximus, vii. 7. Euseb. Præp. Evan. xi. 9. xiii. 12. Clem. Alex. Strom. i. ‡ Clerici Ars Crit. capite de sectarum sermone.

and wise and good men have run into an absurd extreme, when they have rejected a plain clear declaration of an inspired writer, because they could not reduce every idea in it to their own comprehension. Is there not a middle way? May I not be allowed to go on the principles of one, who was not fond of mystery, where he could obtain clear ideas: but who, however preferred a sober rational faith before unscriptural conjectures? I speak of Le Clerc. Nemo mortalium adæquatum notionem Dei perfectionum sibi unquam effinxit . . . Nil igitur tutius esse, quam *cohibere judicium*, cum de re ipsâ, tum de sententia scriptoris, quem legimus.*

There never was a man in the world, who succeeded in attempting to explain the modus of the divine existence. The wisest of men never made the attempt. Moses began his writings by supposing the being of a God; he did not attempt to prove it; and although many of the inspired writers asserted his existence, and to discountenance idolatry, pleaded for his perfections, yet no one of them ever pretended to explain the manner of his being. On the contrary a holy awe covered their minds, all inspired as they were, and they declared, they *could not find the Almighty out.* Why should we affect to be *wise above what is written?*

St. Epiphanius complains, Originem, qui Adamantius et συντακλικὸς nuncupatur, εκ συλλογισμων Αριστοτελικων καὶ γεωμετρικων θεον πάλαι παρεσχαναι, astruere voluisse, et ideo fœde lapsum esse. I fear, too many have fallen by the same mean into error.

Before we deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, what if we were to try to deny the principles, on which the asserters of it go? We lay down one from a Master in Israel. "Certainly we do not know the essence of the Supreme Being, not knowing the real essence of a pebble, or a fly, or of our own selves."† We lay down a second in the words of a learned prelate. "Where the truth of a doctrine depends not on the evidence of the things themselves, but on the authority of him that

* Ars Crit. de notionibus adæquatis. † Locke's Essay, b. ii. c. xxiii. 35. See that whole excellent chapter.

reveals it, there the only way to prove the doctrine to be true, is to prove the testimony of him that revealed it to be infallible."* We lay down a third from that most learned and accurate critic, Le Clerc. " Si eâ quâ par est attentione et reverentia expendamus quæ Apostoli habent de Jesu Christo, facile intelligimus eos non putasse *merum* esse *hominem*, quandoquidem ei mundi creationem tribuunt; eosque errare, qui similia sentiunt; sed de ratione, qua æternum numen cum Jesu homine conjunctum sit, tacent; quo credibile sit arcanum illud iis, in terris agentibus, nondum revelatum fuisse. *Sciverunt certe Christum esse Deum et hominem, atque ita ae eo loquuti sunt : sed* MODUM *rei ignorasse videntur.*†

On these sure grounds we go, and on these principles we free the doctrines of the gospel from the charge of contradiction and absurdity, while we retain the rational scriptural idea of mystery. We beg leave to remark the following facts, which may more fully explain our meaning.

1. What we call doctrines of the gospel are so many facts proposed to our faith by credible testimony. The divinity of Christ is an historical fact. The resurrection of the dead is a prophetical fact.

2. They, who related those facts, never pretended to a thorough knowledge of them. *We know*, says St. Paul, *in part.*‡ The apostle must either mean to affirm, we have an imperfect knowledge of the *objects*, or we have an imperfect knowledge of the *evidence* of their existence. He could not mean the last, consequently he meant the first.

3. The apostles did no more in proposing incomprehensible objects to our belief, than the masters of human science do. " We know but *little*, says one of the finest modern writers, of the nature of bodies; we discover some of their properties, as motion, figure, colours, &c. but of their essence we are ignorant: we know still much *less* of the soul: but of the essense or nature of God, we know *nothing*."§ The great Locke sets out with requiring his readers not to " let loose their thoughts into the vast ocean of *being*, as if all the boundless

* Stillingfleet's origines sacræ. ii. 3. † Ars Crit. de notion. adæq. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 9. § Elements of universal erudition by Baron Bielfeld, vol. i. c. 1.

extent were the natural and undoubted possession of their understanding, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decisions, or that escaped its comprehension."* Astronomers require their pupils to " take care always to approach the firmament, that divine book, as they do the other book of God; with reverence and humility, not having too high an opinion of their own abilities, as if they could with the line of human reason fathom all the depths of divine counsels."† What these great masters discovered in the sublimer works of nature, the countryman discovers in a polype in his cottage ditch ; and all mankind are forced to believe the existence of objects, the certainty of facts, combinations of qualities, of which they have no adequate ideas, and of which they can give no account.

4. No man ever yet proposed a system of religion free from mystery. Even those gentlemen, who discard many received doctrines on account of their mysteriousness, are obliged to own, that " the *most* rational and important doctrines imply something beyond the narrow capacity of our comprehension."‡

5. The belief of those facts, which we call doctrines of the gospel, is analogous in christianity to self-love in the law of nature. " God has inseparably interwoven the laws of eternal justice with the happiness of each individual. In consequence of which mutual connection of justice and human felicity, he has not perplexed the law of nature with a multitude of abstracted rules and precepts, referring merely to the fitness or unfitness of things : but has graciously reduced the rule of obedience to this one paternal precept, that man should pursue his own happiness. This is the foundation of what we call ethics, or natural law."† Thus in revelation, God hath not perplexed christianity with disquisitions, the understanding of which would require a long train of metaphysical investigations : but he hath revealed a few facts, which he declares, he either hath brought to pass, or will bring to pass ; and these facts have ever been found the most irresistible motives to constrain men to obey the law of nature. The unity of two

* Essay, Introduction. † Long's Astronomy, pref. p. 7. ‡ Bourn's Discourses, vol. ii. disc. vii. § Blackstone's Commentaries, Introduction, s. 2.

natures, constituting the dignity of the Author of christianity, is one of these facts.

6. To deprive christianity of its mysteries is to reduce it to a feeble human science: we get rid of mystery and motive together. The removal of, what are called by some, corruptions of christianity, is to be rewarded, it seems, with the conversion of Jews and Mohammedans. But let us not too eagerly follow these illusory dreams. Let us consider four things. 1. It is not certain, that Jews and Turks reject christianity on account of our doctrine of Christ's divinity: They do not study our polemical divinity; they study easier books, our lives, and in them they read objections against christianity. 2. If it be true, that Christ's divinity is a stumbling-block to the modern Jews, nothing is seen in it but the fulfilment of prophecy. *The Lord of hosts is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence* to them, as he was to their fathers, *who stumbled at* Christ, *that stumbling stone.** 3. The doctrine of accomodation, which is the ground of these pretences, is the most dangerous doctrine in the world. A miser stumbles at the laws of liberality, a proud man stumbles at the gospel motives to humility, a mere rationalist stumbles at the invisible realities of faith; and by endeavouring to accommodate the gospel to these dispositions we explain it all away. 4. Were we to divest religion of all these offensive *credenda*, and were we to reduce it to the gospel of Socrates, or to the more refined gospel of Professor Hutcheson, would it convert the Turks and the Jews? A great authority assures us, "Science and philosophy always operate slowly; and it is long before their influence reaches the people, or can produce any sensible effect upon them. They may perhaps gradually, and in a long course of years, undermine and shake an established system of false religion, but there is no instance of their having overturned one."† A reflection well worth the attention of those, who would reduce the gospel to an enfeebled system of mere moral philosophy.

God hath not been pleased to reveal the *modus* of his exis-

* Isa. viii. 13. 14. Rom. ix 32, 33. 1 Pet. ii. 4, &c. † Dr. Robertson's Hist. of Charles V. book xii.

tence to us: but he hath been pleased to say, *Let all bitterness and wrath and evil speaking be put away from among you.* I have not therefore thought myself at liberty to call names, and to denounce judgments. I have seen a writer on one side *prove* that *Jesus Christ thought not of the impious robbery of being equal with God*, by repeatedly declaring that the doctrine of Christ's divinity is A MOST ABSURD AND IMPIOUS DOCTRINE; and I have seen one on the other side affirm, *Christ died both with respect to his human and divine nature*, and *prove* it by adding, *They who maintain the contrary, belong to the devil both body and soul.** But I have disliked this method of reasoning ever since I saw a book entitled *Foxes and Firebrands.*

I have no design by this Letter to enter into a controversy with any man, nor should I have found time to have written it, unless an attention to my health had confined me. If I have let fall one unkind reflection on any conscientious man, I beg pardon; it was undesigned. I would rather bring the subject home to my own bosom, in the pious soliloquy of my most worthy friend the Reverend Mr. Turner.† "How, my soul, doest thou stand affected towards this Saviour? What hast thou seen of his excellencies, and how far have they, indeed, impressed and moved thy affectionate powers? Thou owest all to him that thou canst call *enjoyment* either in possession or in hope! Let the glories of thy Redeemer be more attentively considered—let his love constrain thee to the supreme love of God, and just love to man.—To this fulness go in all thy necessities; here look for light, and life, and joy eternal.—To his service and pleasure devote all thy powers; live to him in improving holiness—let the liberty he has given thee of applying to him as the fountain of happiness, encourage thee to diligence and constancy in that application.—Let thy thirst be always for these *living waters*, which alone are capable of satisfying thee.—As he is all *fullness* to thee, be thou all *gratitude*, and *love*, and *praise* to him; rejoice in

* Musculus. Bayle. Rem. K.

† See that excellent little piece entitled, SHORT MEDITATIONS ON SELECT PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE; a piece, which it would be difficult to commend, as its merit demands. The above is from Medit. V.

him as thy light, thy strength, thy righteousness, and thy salvation! Amen!

Hail, thou ETERNAL FULNESS, hail!
Great source of bliss divine!
In whom adoring angels see
All thy great Father shine.

JESUS!—O may that best of names
Dwell ever on my tongue!
On earth my solace, hope, and love,
In heaven my rapturous song!"

FINIS.

THE

# *GENERAL DOCTRINE*

OF

# TOLERATION,

APPLIED TO THE

# PARTICULAR CASE

OF

# FREE COMMUNION.

[FIRST PRINTED, 1781.]

*SO much, and so much to the purpose, has been published on the doctrine of church fellowship, that nothing but the repeated solicitations of friends, who would take no denial, could have induced me to add to the number of such publications. I do not pretend to say any thing new on the subject, I have only endeavoured to state the case, and arrange the arguments, leaving every reader to form his own judgment.*

# INTRODUCTION.

THE most diligent and upright disciples of Jesus Christ have always entertained, and do yet entertain various sentiments concerning articles of faith and modes of divine worship, and there are but *two* ways of acting among christians in this case.

The first, which the far greater part profess to pursue, is that of obtaining, some way or other, unity of faith, and *uniformity* of practice. In the papal corporation, and in some reformed communities, riches and power contend with weakness and want to silence scruples, and to force a real or professed uniformity. In some of our nonconformist churches, learning, argument and beneficence are employed to produce the same effect. At length, however, unquestionable facts prove, that, how upright soever the attempt may be, the end is unattainable. The mind of man, uncontrolled in its operations, and for ever diversifying its modes of thinking, refuses to submit to restraint, and it is the virtue of such a mind to avow its refusal.

If uniformity cannot be obtained, say the other, and the smaller part of christians, there remains

only one thing for us to do; we must so constitute our churches as to *allow* variety of sentiment and practice, and by so doing acknowledge the force of nature for the voice of God. Let us put, say they, *toleration* in the place of uniformity; this can never be produced; but that lies within the reach of every society.

The English nonconformists have, of all mankind, best understood, and most practised christian liberty: but there have arisen in many of their churches, as may naturally be supposed of men zealous for their religious principles, doubts and debates concerning the *extent* of that toleration, which christian liberty implies, but which, however ought not to run into licentiousness, as it would if it went so far as to hazard the purity of gospel worship and order.

Under this consideration comes the well known controversy among our Baptist congregations, whether churches consisting of members all baptized by immersion on a profession of faith and repentance, ought to admit into their fellowship such persons as profess faith and repentance, and desire communion with them, but refuse to be baptized by immersion, because they account they have been rightly baptized by sprinkling in their infancy. To this question, and to this only, we shall confine our attention.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THIS CONTROVERSY.

This dispute, it should seem, began in the reign of Charles I. Some time about the year 1633, a member of that congregational church in London, of which Mr. Lathorp was pastor, doubting the validity of that baptism, which Mr. Lathorp had administered to his child, carried the child to the parish priest to be rebaptized. This affair came before the brethren at a church meeting, and of consequence brought on an inquiry, first concerning the validity of lay baptism, and next concerning the validity of infant baptism itself. In the end, several members declared against infant baptism, and desired liberty to depart, and to form a distinct congregation in such order as was most agreeable to their own sentiments. To this peaceable proposal the church agreed, and, the new church being formed, Mr. Spilsbury was appointed pastor of it.

In 1634 Mr. Lathorp, with about thirty of his members, fled into New England from the persecution of the prelates. After his departure his church divided into three parts; Mr. Canne was minister of one, Mr. Barebone of another, and Mr. Jessey of the third. These frequent divisions did not proceed, as their adversaries affirmed, from a factious spirit, much less from the nature and constitution of our churches, but partly from the great increase of their members, and partly from

the danger of being discovered by their persecutors, when large societies met.

In 1638 Mr. Kiffin, and several other members of Mr. Jessey's church, having become baptists, were dismissed from thence to the church under the care of Mr. Spilsbury. In Mr. Spilsbury's church persons were allowed to preach, who had not been baptized by immersion. Mr. Kiffin, who was himself a preacher, objected against this, and at length removed his communion to the church at Devonshire-square, where he was afterward settled pastor. A transition from the right of unbaptized persons to preach, to the right of the same persons to communion, was natural, and Mr. Kiffin soon published a piece entitled *A sober discourse of right to church communion*, in which he endeavoured to prove, that no unbaptized persons may be regularly admitted to the Lord's supper. I take this to be the first piece published professedly on this subject.

Mr. Jessey continued to practise infant baptism till 1645, when he renounced that opinion, and was baptized by immersion by Mr. Hanserd Knollys, who had been the same year ordained pastor of a baptist church assembling in great St. Helen's.

Mr. Jessey did not quit his former charge on being baptized, but continued pastor of the same church till his death, which happened in Sept. 1663. His situation naturally led him to study the point of *right* to church fellowship, and, judging mixt communion lawful, he wrote a small piece in defence of it. It is a dissertation, perhaps a

sermon, on Rom. xiv. 1. *Such as are weak in the faith receive ye.* It does not appear, that this piece was printed during the life of Mr. Jessey. It is not in any list of his works, which I have seen. The person, who afterward published it, says "I met with it *providentially*····it was sent many years since to *some* of the baptists····it will be *attested* to be Mr. Jessey's, if need shall require." This piece, then, seems to have gone about in manuscript.

In 1672, Mr. Bunyan, then in prison, published his *confession of faith*, and in it pleaded warmly for mixt communion. In answer to this, Messieurs Kiffin and Paul published a piece entitled—*Some serious reflections on that part of Mr. Bunyan's confession of faith touching church communion with unbaptized believers.* These gentlemen treated John very cavalierly. Your *conclusion*, say they, *is devilish topfull of ignorance and prejudice:* but this we forgive them, for John was a tinker without dish or spoon, and at best but a country teacher, and the Rev. Mr. William Kiffin was a London minister, and worth forty thousand pounds.

The next year, Mr. Bunyan published an answer entitled *Differences in judgment about water baptism no bar to communion*, and to this he subjoined the abovementioned piece of Mr. Jessey's, to satisfy the call of his opponents, who had required him to produce the testimony of some author. To this piece of Mr. Bunyan's Messieurs Danvers and Paul replied, and John answered them in 1674 in about two sheets in twelves enti-

tled *Peaceable principles and true.* In all these he continued uniform in his sentiments, declaring he would abide by his faith and practice till the *moss shall grow upon his eyebrows.* I mention this, because the editors of his works in folio have inserted a discourse entitled—*An exhortation to peace and unity,* in which it is declared that baptism is essential to church communion; but, it is evident, Bunyan never wrote this piece. 1. The *doctrine* is not his, and the above article and some others are diametrically opposite to his avowed principles. 2. The *style* is not his, as a comparison between this and his genuine works will clearly demonstrate. I venture to affirm, Bunyan could not write in such a style, might he have been freed from imprisonment for doing so. 3. The *quotations* are none of his. How could he quote Plutarch, Camden's Britannia, Greek and Roman history, books he never saw, nor could have read had he seen them? 4. The writer of this discourse talks *Latin* too, and concludes with *Vale.* I recollect only one scrap of latin in John's works, and he has put opposite to that in the margin, *the Latin I borrow.* 5. There is *no mention* of this piece in that list of his works, which was published by that great admirer of him Mr. Charles Doe, who knew him personally, and who bought some manuscrips of his son after his decease, and published them, particularly *The heavenly footman,* and along with it a correct list of all his genuine works, with dates, sizes, &c. This therefore is one of the many spurious pieces ascribed to Bunyan by some

poverty-struck scribblers, who stole his golden name to give currency to their own base coin.

Since Mr. Bunyan's time the controversy has sometimes subsided, and at other times risen into considerable warmth. The celebrated Dr. James Foster warmly pleaded the cause of mixt fellowship in a sermon, afterward printed, entitled *Catholic communion*, which gave occasion to a dispute, that lasted eight or ten years, from about 1750 to 1760. The Rev. Mr. Charles Bulkley and others supported the Dr's side of the question, and the Rev. Grantham Killingworth and others maintained the contrary opinion.

In 1772 the question was started again, and the doctrine of mixt communion was affirmed by the Rev. Messieurs Turner of Abingdon, Ryland of Northampton, and Brown of Kettering; and denied by the Rev. Messieurs Turner of Birmingham, Booth of London, Buttfield of Thorn, and several more, who took fictitious names, without any reason I think, for their real names do honour to every cause, to which they think proper to affix them.

I have carefully read all the pieces, and, I think, though different degrees of esteem are due to different writers, yet some respect is due to them all. For my part, however backward I may be to controvert such points, I confess, I am always edified by reading the controversies. I admire the constitution of our churches, because it admits of free debate. Happy community hat can produce a

dispute of one hundred and fifty years unstained with the blood, and unsullied with the fines, the imprisonments and the civil inconveniences of the disputants. As to a few coarse names, rough compliments, foreign suppositions, and acrimonious exclamations, they are only the harmless squeakings of men in a passion caught and pinched in a sort of logical trap. We shall waive all these, and attend to *what* has been said, and not to the *manner* in which it was spoken.

## CASE STATED.

This whole debate, I should suppose, may be divided into a case of *fact* and a case of *right*.

## CASE OF FACT.

On the one hand, it is matter of fact, that many sincere disciples of Christ declare, that, having renounced all authority except that of the holy scriptures to decide in all matters of faith and practice, and having searched the scriptures with all the diligence and rectitude, of which they are capable, they think infant baptism of divine appointment, and rightly performed by sprinkling water on the face.

It is matter of fact, that many baptist churches do conscientiously admit such persons into their fellowship.

It is also fact, that these churches affirm, and they are best capable of giving evidence in this

case, that no inconvenience has arisen to them from the mixture of their communion. The writer of this has been a member of such a church more than twenty years, but has never heard of the least disadvantage arising to the community from it, and he has received a like attestation from the ministers of several other mixed churches.

Further, it is a fact, that these members perform all the duties of church fellowship, glorify God in their lives and conversations, and support the character of christians as honourably as the baptist brethren do.

Moreover, it is a matter of fact, that some churches have been mixed from before the time of the civil war in the reign of Charles I. when the baptists first made their publick appearance in England.

In fine, it is an undeniable fact, that, during the time of the great papal apostacy, while churches were congregated in private for fear of prelatical persecution, believers, who held infant baptism, and believers, who disowned it, were united in the same community, as ancient manuscripts and authentick records abundantly prove.

On the other hand, it is certain, that, from the first publick appearance of baptist churches in England, many have refused, and to this day continue to refuse to admit into their fellowship all manner of persons, however qualified in other respects, who have not been baptized by immersion on their own profession of faith and repentance.

It is equally true, that all these baptists allow the piety and virtue of unbaptized believers, account them members of the mystical body of Christ, and some of them possessors of knowledge and piety far superior to their own, and they hold themselves bound to discharge every kind office to them, except this one of admitting them to church fellowship.

It is a fact, that these churches do not believe baptism a saving ordinance, nor do they think it a test of true religion, nor do they hold that unbaptized believers ought not to be tolerated in a state, nor do they deny any intelligent being the right of private judgment; they only refuse to tolerate infant baptism in their own churches.

It is also a clear fact, that these baptists affirm, their refusal does not proceed from wilful ignorance, obstinacy, spirit of party, bigotry, or any other illiberal disposition; but from a fear of offending God by acting without a sufficient warrant from his written word, the rule of all religious conduct. Their testimony ought to be admitted, because they are the best judges of their own motives, because the general conduct of their lives confirms their testimony, and because (of some of them it must be allowed) they extend candour and compliments and polite professions of liberality of sentiment far, very far indeed, beyond what some of their brethren, who hold free communion, pretend to do.

Moreover, it is a fact unquestionable, that, as some independent churches practising free com-

munion have admitted so many baptists members, that the latter have in time formed a great majority, who have chosen a baptist minister, through whose influence the church has become a baptist church; so, on the contrary, some baptist churches holding free communion have admitted so many unbaptized members, that the churches have in time chosen ministers, who held infant-baptism, and lost the ordinance of baptism by immersion.

Lastly: it is matter of fact, that the primitive churches, those in Greece, that at Rome, and all others, were originally constituted baptist churches, and that they lost the ordinance of baptism, along with the doctrines of the gospel, and the very nature and essence of christian churches, not by practising a wise toleration towards men of allowed piety, but by setting up certain external qualifications of church members, which in time became tests of orthodoxy, to which wicked men could and did conform, under pretence of authority from Christ to establish uniformity.

All these are *facts*, but none of these constitute *christian law*, and, if we would ascertain what is right, we must distinguish what *is* from what *ought to be.*

## CASE OF RIGHT.

THE question before us is RIGHT to church fellowship, and our inquiry must necessarily be, what makes it just and right for churches to admit of mixed communion. The proper answer to this

inquiry, on the allowed principles of all the disputants, is, THE REVEALED WILL OF JESUS CHRIST, the original projector of church fellowship, and the sole legislator in all the assemblies of his saints.

In strict adherence to this truly protestant ground of action, and in order to try out the question as fairly and clearly as we can, we will ascertain *the judge* of the controversy, and *the law* of the case, and in order to this we will turn the subject on both sides, and first shew negatively what does *not* make the law of the case, and then positively what *does*.

First, then nothing can be determined concerning the right in question from the *universal consent*, real or pretended, *of men out of our own community*. We divide these into *four* classes, and, although we have all due regard for them, yet we reject each apart, and all together, as judges pronouncing law in this case.

First, the *fathers* are incompetent, for, if any thing in their writings look like the case before us, it is the case of heretical baptism: but the amount of all our inquiries on this article would be, that one says yea, and another says nay, and both refer us to Jesus Christ, and so we leave off where we began.

Secondly: *Roman Catholicks*, both in council and out of it, are incompetent; for their proper work, for which they are hired and retained, is not investigation of truth, much less determining protestant controversies; but submission to infallible papal authority. A catholick priest does not de-

serve to be made a lord prelate till he has well and thoroughly learnt, that his business is not to examine the load, but to keep the cart on wheels.

Thirdly: *polemical divines, and pious ones too, in established reformed churches,* utter no law here. The case in hand never came, never could come seriously before them, and, if it had, having previously resigned the right of judging for themselves by subscribing a religious test, they could not prudently, or even uprightly, give an opinion in direct contradiction to it. All baptists judge, that these divines are mistaken in every part of baptism, in the nature, the subject, the mode, and the end of it, and this is one reason of their dissent from them; they cannot therefore consistently allow their opinions on baptism and church government the force of law.

Lastly: *Learned criticks,* foreign or domestick, have no occasion to interfere in this case, nor can they be offended at our affirming, that the christian church stands in no need of their assistance in this point now before them, for this plain reason, it is not a learned question. It would be a great misfortune to a company of plain homely christians in church fellowship, if any case pertaining to life and godliness must cost fifteen hundred pounds worth of Latin and Greek to make evident and clear.

Should all these four classes of writers agree to make baptism necessary to salvation, necessary to a civil office, necessary to receiving the Lord's supper, necessary to the honour of being enrolled in

the parish register while we live, and necessary to that of purifying among our neighbours after we are dead, and should any baptist so far forget himself as to urge this universal consent as argument why *we* should not admit the persons in question to the Lord's table, I will venture to say, it would be an unfair appeal to the sheepishness of some, and the modesty of others, in a case of conscience, where only scripture is law, and Christ alone is judge.

Secondly: nothing can be argued for or against this right from the *great names in our own churches* employed in this controversy. Gale and Foster, Bunyan and Kiffin, along with all the moderns, before whom the case actually came, and who had personal interest in deciding it, are respectable as counsel pleading on different sides of the question, and we calmly attend to what they say; but none of their opinions constitute the *law* of the case.

Thirdly: nothing can be determined for it from *general notions* of benevolence and usefulness, nor against it from zealous and upright intentions of preserving purity of doctrine and order, for in a case that comes under written revealed law, as the constitution of christian churches evidently does, general dispositions must be regulated by particular directions.

Fourthly: neither can one side infer the right in question from *any particular case* mentioned in the New Testament, nor can the other support their plea against it by the silence of the New Testament; for the truth is, infant baptism was not then

known, and consequently the case of admitting to fellowship persons baptized in infancy does not occur there.

Fifthly: *no accidental circumstances* can determine this matter. There have fallen into this controversy, as into all others, a collection of what I call accidental circumstances, and which have been argued upon, and have led off the attention of the inquirer from the case in hand.

For example. 1. *Cases* have been supposed and urged, as that of admitting Jesuits, and Quakers, and others; but these suppositions prove nothing. Lawyers say truly, there is nothing so hard to find as a case in point. These cases are not in point, for they never did happen, they never can happen, and were they to happen they would not be *this* case, and they must be investigated on other principles, and rejected for other reasons. Neither supposed cases urged on one side, nor real cases allowed on the other, constitute the law of this case.

2. *The motives, tempers and views* of the disputants decide nothing. A sour surly man may growl and grumble truth, a well bred man may warble melodious nonsense, a sincere disputant may be a very silly fellow, and a man right in his principles may be wrong in his motives of defending them.

3. *Mistakes and self contradictions* in writers yield no argument against the general truth, which they are defending. If upright men sometimes in the heat of controversy forget themselves, we should do worse than they, were we to magnify

their frailty into a crime, and their crime into a rule of action. On the other hand, an argument may be uniform, and free from self-contradiction, and yet it may not hit the case.

4. *Frightful consequences*, affixed by one writer to the arguments of another, ought not to be urged as decisive reasoning constituting the law of a case.

In short, the right or wrong of this case is determinable only by the written revealed will of God, a test of truth, which all the parties will allow.

Having thus cleared the court of a bustling noisy crowd, that do no good because they give no evidence, and do a deal of harm because they perplex the question by throwing in a quantity of foreign matter, let us proceed to investigate what is the law of *Christ* in this case.

We affirm, then, that it is JUST and RIGHT and agreeable to the revealed will of Christ, that Baptist churches should admit into their fellowship such persons as desire admission on profession of faith and repentance, although they refuse to be baptized by immersion, because they sincerely believe they have been rightly baptized by sprinkling in their infancy.

By way of explanation, I beg leave to distinguish what our divines call the *esse* or the *being* of a church, from the *melius* esse, or *best* being of one; for, although I affirm such a mixt church to be a rightly constituted church, yet I do not say, its constitution is so perfect as that of the primitive churches. A church that tolerates is a good church:

but a church that has no errors to tolerate is a better. We do not therefore blame those churches, which were never required to admit unbaptized believers, for maintaining strict communion; we only say, where the requisition is made, a compliance with it is just and right.

In support of this sentiment we beg leave to offer *two sorts* of arguments, the first taken from those *general principles of analogy*, on which, the scriptures declare, the christian church is founded; and the second from the *express laws of Jesus Christ* recorded in scripture for the regulation of our conduct.

God is an intelligent being. An intelligent being exercises his intelligence when he constructs any exterior work, and the work will resemble the intelligence of its maker. A wise and beneficent being will naturally and necessarily form a work full of beneficence and wisdom. Should a perfect being create a world, it would be a world expressive of his invisible perfections; should he form a church in this world, it would be a church constituted on similar principles, and, if skill and compassion were excellencies of his nature, compassion and skill might be expected in the construction of his church. There would be an analogy, or resemblance, between the ties of nature and the social bonds of grace.

We find on reading the new testament, that God is the author of christianity, the creator of the christian church, that he hath displayed the eminence of his perfections in the construction of

it, and that he hath inviolably preserved an analogy between the natural and preternatural worlds. This is the true ground of all the parables, in which Christ taught his heavenly doctrine, and of all the discourses, by which he displayed the conduct of God to men under resemblances of a father and his sons, a shepherd and his flock, a husbandman and his lands, and so on. For the same reasons, we are expressly told of the aboundings, or abundance of the wisdom and prudence, the power and pity, the forbearance and patience, the love and compassion of God toward his church. He exercises the same attributes in the church as in the world, with this only difference, the display is brightest in the first. This is what we call analogy, and from this general source we derive many particular arguments from the nature and fitness of things in defence of our proposition.

First: It is just and right, and agreeable to the nature and fitness of things, that we should *diminish evils and difficulties, which we are not able wholly to remove.* There is in nature a thousand obstacles in the way of every just pursuit. Agriculture, commerce, navigation, literature, government civil and domestick, are all attended with difficulties, some of which threaten the subversion of the whole. It should seem better, at first sight, that no obstacles should exist to discourage such just and laudable pursuits: but they do exist, and we cannot help their existence, yea, perhaps their existence may be necessary to give being and ex-

ercise to some of the finest abilities and virtues of mankind.

Our skill, and our duty too, consist neither in wholly removing these evils, for that is not in our power, nor in remaining plaintive and inactive, doing nothing where much may be done, though not all we wish; but in diminishing these ills and in making the most and best of such materials as providence hath actually put into our hands. Every projector of a great design exercises his penetration in foreseeing what obstacles may obstruct the execution of it, and much of his skill lies in providing against them.

We apply this to the case in hand. Christianity is highly fitted, and admirably adapted to the actual state and condition of men and things in this world. It was excellently said by Jesus Christ, *The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath*, implying that positive religion was so contrived as to yield in certain cases to natural and necessary contingencies. The man, who uses all diligence to obtain evidence of believers baptism, and cannot obtain it, and yet desires admission to the Lord's table, throws a difficulty in the way of the church, a difficulty, too, which they cannot remove; but, the question is, can they not diminish it? It hath pleased God to give this man faith in Christ and moral obedience; but it does not please him to give him light into adult baptism. He does not belong to the world, he does not desire to trouble the church, he only wishes for a peaceable admission to fellowship; we cannot give him know-

ledge, we cannot baptize him without it; but we can admit him to the Lord's table and so build God's house with the best materials we have. It is a case of insurmountable difficulty; it cannot be wholly removed; but it may be diminished. This argument is taken from that *analogy* which there evidently is between the œconomy of nature and that of christianity; and, if it be a less evil for an unbaptized believer to be incorporated in the church than to lie exposed in the world, the reasoning is valid.

Secondly: It is fit and right, and agreeable to the nature of things, that there should be *no disqualification where there is no crime.* On this principle we argue against a sacramental test in the episcopal church. Christian churches are free states, and full fellowship is the new birthright of every regenerate man. The candidate for fellowship, who has examined believers baptism by immersion, and cannot obtain evidence of the truth of it, is indeed in a state, in which his knowledge is imperfect; but his imperfection is innocent, becuse he hath exercised all the ability and virtue he has, and his ignorance is involuntary, yea perhaps he may have exercised ten times more industry and application, though without success, than many others, who have obtained evidence. To deny church-fellowship to persons of genuine virtue, and of, it may be, superior virtue too, is to affix a disgrace and inflict a punishment both without an offence, and in violation of a right. This is a case of involuntary error, and there is, there

can be no moral turpitude in it. Where there is allowed virtue in the general course of a man's actions, and no moral evil in one particular imperfection, it is not imaginable that any punishment should be inflicted, or any benefit of society denied. Now, as we all agree, that Christ hath constituted his church on principles of *equity*, it should seem, this argument is valid and of force.

Thirdly: It is just and right, and agreeable to the nature of things, that *all men should be placed in that condition, in which they can do most good.* By this rule we determine what is usually denominated *a call in providence*, and an all-sufficient rule it is. Now, by excluding the persons in question from church fellowship, we deprive the church of many wise and worthy members, who might become extremely useful, and we deny them the liberty of exercising such abilities as God gave them for the publick edification. If Christ constituted his church on a principle of promoting the greatest *social* good, it should seem, this argument also ought to have its weight.

Fourthly: It is just and right in virtuous communities, that *a visible difference should be put between the righteous and the wicked.* If hatred of sin and love of holiness were principles of constructing the christian church, as they certainly were, this argument too is good. The candidate in question is not rejected on account of any thing in common with the rest of exempts; he is neither an infidel nor an immoral man, yet he is as really excluded as they are. This is a confounding of cha-

racters essentially different, which should seem unwarrantable in a society professedly incorporated for the purpose of separating and distinguishing them. Shall *he that sweareth, and he that feareth an oath*, be held at equal distance from the Lord's table, and all the other benefits of church fellowship!

Fifthly: It would argue *great unfitness in any scheme of religion for this world, if it made no provision for human imperfections.* If a plan of religion provided for the wilful perpetration of vice, it would be a scheme fit for infernal spirits. If it provided only for perfect knowledge and virtue, it would be a plan fit for only angels to realize; but if, while it provided for eminent attainments of knowledge and goodness, it provided also for imperfections, that is, for small and inferior degrees of science and moral excellence; if it provided for increase of knowledge and virtue, though accompanied with much ignorance and weakness, then would it commend itself for a divine system fitted by perfect wisdom and goodness for frail imperfect men. The candidates, for whom we plead, are allowed to possess that general excellence, a supreme love to truth and virtue, from which all knowledge and all good actions proceed; but they have not yet attained those peculiar exercises of it, which produce some particular parts of obedience: however, it seems fit and right, that they should be permitted to perform all they do know; and patiently borne with till they are able to make further progress. If Jesus Christ constituted his

church on principles of *patience* and forbearance, condescension and long suffering, it should seem, this argument also ought to have some authority over us.

From arguments of this sort, and we omit many, which might be adduced, there arises a high probability, that it is just and right for christian churches to admit of free communion.

Were these reasonings on the nature of things alone, and were they unconnected with revelation, and unsupported by it, they would come under the description of general dispositions not regulated by particular directions, and consequently they ought not to be urged in this controversy as decisive in point of right or law; but when we examine the scriptures, and find, that christianity is actually constituted on these principles, that these are adopted as grounds of the divine conduct to us and rules of our actions to one another, we have a right to conclude, that these arguments are fair, valid and conclusive.

We have not hesitated to affirm, that God was the original projector of those associated bodies of men for divine worship, which we call christian churches. We have made no scruple of affirming that the original projector formed these churches on principles of wisdom, equity, compassion, love of holiness, and so on. We have not quoted passages of scripture to prove this, for the point is beyond contradiction, and the quotations would be endless. If these should be accounted only pro-

bable arguments, we trust the next will produce demonstration.

Our second class of arguments we take from EXPRESS LAWS OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP contained in the written revealed will of our excellent legislator.

First. We argue from his *law of exclusion.* There are in the new testament many lists of persons, who may not be admitted into the christian church in this world, and who will be denied an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Some of these lists are general, others descend to particulars; but there is no mention of the persons now before us in any of them. Had the law of exclusion been made by a legislator, who could not pry into futurity, it might be imagined he did not foresee the case, he did not know that such persons would ever appear; but there is no room to urge this, for our lawgiver was a prophet, and a tender prophet, who foresaw all future periods and persons, and forewarned his church of every thing that would endanger the constitution of it.

The natural tendency of every good man is to associate with other good men, and to go with them into the enjoyment of every immunity, that belongs to their society, and his apparent right to enjoy all the comforts as well as to suffer all the crosses of his condition is so highly probable, that nothing less than a clear, positive, express law of exclusion seems necessary to empower any church to refuse his claim. If there be no such law, and none such there is, we cannot help saying to the

candidate before us,—*Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?*

Secondly. We argue from his *law of toleration.* The particular case of the persons in question, we allow, is not mentioned in the new testament; but a general law including this, and many more such cases, is published, and answers the end better than the insertion of any particular case could have done. This law is, that all christians should enjoy unmolested IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH the right of private judgment. In a multitude of passages in the new testament, the disciples of Christ are exhorted to judge for themselves in all matters of religion and conscience, and this right of self-determination is vindicated not only against magistrates, philosophers and Rabbies, but against fellow-members, as in the xivth of Romans; and even against inspired apostles, as in the 8th and 10th verses of the xxiiid of Matthew. By this law we are bound to allow an universal toleration in all matters, that do not destroy the essence of gospel worship.

Before we proceed, it will be necessary to explain our meaning, and an answer to three plain questions will sufficiently do so. First: *What* do we plead for? We answer, A free toleration of the right of private judgment. There is in our churches, strictly speaking, no such thing as publick faith; our standard of faith is the holy scripture, and whatever we publish beside are the private sentiments of different men, and different commu-

nities ; and it is questionable whether any two churches so exactly agree as *bona fide* to constitute an uniformity. Now we plead for the allowance of this right to unbaptized believers. What one of our churches allows to another of our churches, that, we suppose, each church ought to allow to all its own members, and to all good men. Secondly : *Where* do we plead for the free exercise of this right to be tolerated? We answer, not in the state, that our civil governors allow, but in the church. We do not only affirm, that unbaptized believers have a natural right to freedom in Britain, so that they may congregate, and form churches of their own faith and order ; but we affirm, that they have a scriptural right to their own faith and order in our churches. It will be objected, this would destroy our own faith and order. In answer to this, we propose a third question,— *How far* is this toleration to extend, and where shall we draw the line? We answer, in general, Toleration ought to extend as far as is consistent with purity of faith and order, and of this each church ought to judge for itself.

If we descend to particulars, we must observe, that the objects of toleration are two, errors of faith, and irregularities of practice. In regard to faith we must distinguish between the *facts* recorded in scripture, such as the birth, life, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, second coming, judgment, and universal dominion of Christ, from *reasonings* upon these facts; they are the latter that are the proper objects of toleration. He who

denies the facts is an infidel, he does not believe the record God has given of his son, and consequently he is not a disciple of Christ, and so can have no claim to sit at his table. A man, who does believe the facts, but who reasons obliquely upon them, is a believer, and he ought to be tolerated though he is an inconclusive reasoner. The other object of toleration is irregularity of practice. Christian obedience is submission to two sorts of precepts, the one moral, the other positive. The object of toleration in moral obedience is that sort of improper action, which proceeds not from malice, but from infirmity. The object of toleration in positive obedience is that sort of irregularity, which proceeds from innocent mental error. Now this kind of toleration, while it provides for the peace and prosperity of the church, and for the ease of tender consciences, neither destroys the essence of christianity nor the purity of gospel worship.

In effect, we do tolerate in all our churches each of these imperfections. 1. In regard to *faith*. A church believing the mediation of Jesus Christ, which is a fact, admits a believer of this fact to fellowship, although he thinks it was necessary in order to this mediation that the human soul of Christ should pre-exist his incarnation. In such a case the church distinguishes between the fact, that Christ is a mediator, which the member believes, and his false reasoning upon the fact, that it was necessary the human soul of Christ should be first created, and that it should exist in heaven before his incarnation, in order to mediate between

God and man in behalf of the old testament saints. The same may be said of many other cases. We repeat it again, the clear facts recorded in scripture are not objects of toleration, and a denier of them is an infidel; but errors in reasoning concerning these facts, such as the time and mode of their existence, and so on, are objects of toleration, and of a toleration every way safe to the facts themselves.

2. In regard to the toleration of *moral* irregularities, it is certain we are obliged to make, and do actually make the distinction above mentioned. We exclude members for such immoral actions as proceed from malice, and hatred of virtue; but we never think of expelling any for such immoral actions as proceed from infirmity. For example. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*, is a moral law, founded in the nature and fitness of things; and should any member of our churches, with malicious motives, and on purpose to injure another, violate this law, we should expel him as a hater of morality, an enemy to the rights of all mankind, whom he attacked in the one injured person: but if another, without any apparent malice, and merely to gratify a silly infirmity, a love of tattling and chattering, take up a false report rashly, and tell it carelessly to the injury of his brother, we should not expel this man. We should pity him, and pray for him, and exhort him to exercise more caution for the future; and, though we knew he had not such an absolute government of his tongue as the law required, yet

we should tolerate him, and such a toleration would not in the least endanger the law.

3. In respect to irregularities in *obedience to positive precepts*, we all exercise a toleration of these in an ample manner, except in the one article before us, to which some of us object. Our churches have never yet agreed on the number of positive institutes. All hold two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; some add a third, the Sunday sabbath; others several more, as worshipping God by singing, anointing the sick with oil, abstaining from things strangled and from blood, and so on. We tolerate irregularities in all these cases, and we have instances of pastors, who observe the jewish sabbath, exercising the pastoral office with the highest honour both to the church and themselves, in congregations that profane the jewish sabbath, and hold the Sunday sabbath to be a positive divine institute. Now as all positive institutes proceed from the same legislator, and ought all to be treated with equal reverence, and as we tolerate irregularities in some of them without any danger to the general law of obedience to positive religion, what imaginable good reason can be produced for making an exception in the case of unbaptized believers?

This kind of toleration is professedly treated of in the fourteenth chapter of Romans, and the inspired apostle defends it on the principles, which we have laid down. There is, he affirms, no moral turpitude in mental errors, and the toleration of them is perfectly consistent with the safety of

the church, the purity of the faith, and the order of divine worship.

The believer, who was baptized in his infancy, claims a right to church fellowship; the church judges he has not been baptized, but he judges he has been baptized in his infancy by sprinkling according to Christ's institution. Now this is his own case; it is a case of innocent irregularity in obeying a positive institute, and he ought to be allowed to judge for himself. Here the fort of those, who refuse admission to such members falls to the ground. They reason thus. All churches require persons to be baptized before they admit them to the Lord's supper; now we deny that infant sprinkling is baptism; we therefore require persons, who have been sprinkled in infancy, to be baptized by immersion. When people reason thus for themselves they reason rightly; but when they reason thus for another person they claim a right of judging for him, and consequently deny him that liberty of self judging, which they themselves exercise under a law, which the common legislator ordained alike for both. We do not then plead for the admission of such a person because we think he hath been baptized, for in our opinion he hath not; but because he judges he has been baptized; and we have no authority to deprive him of the right of private judgment, but on the contrary we are expressly commanded to allow him the liberty of determining for himself.

If any reply, we allow his right of private judgment, and he may join a church of his own senti-

ments ; we answer, that does not alter the case ; you are required to allow the exercise of private judgment *in* your own community, not out of it, where your allowance and disallowance operate nothing.

Agreeably to this principle, when I have had the honour to assist in forming a christian church intending to hold mixed communion, I have first embodied the baptists, and they have afterwards admitted believers, who were satisfied with their infant baptism, on the footing of toleration. The whole christian church, in my opinion, was thus *planted in this likeness of Christ's death,* and at the same time the laws of christian liberty and toleration were delivered to them to be made use of as the exigencies of the times should require.

We will conclude this article with two remarks. First: when an unbaptized believer appears before the brethren at a church meeting, and, professing faith and repentance, requires admission into church fellowship, the true question before the church is not whether he have been baptized, but whether he may judge for himself ? Secondly: no instance can be produced of any apostle presuming to judge for any primitive christian, and making his opinion the ground of that christian's conduct. On the contrary, instances may be produced of an inspired apostle's declaring himself of one opinion on positive institutes, and pleading for the liberty of christians to embrace another. *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that es-*

*teemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

Thirdly: let us attend to *the law of baptism itself* in its original institution. While we pay all due reverence to a divine institute, we ought not to make more of it than the institutor made; neither ought we to remove it from that place in which his wisdom set it. Baptism has been called an *initiating* ordinance, that is, an ordinance by which we enter into something. Let us remember this is not a scriptural definition of baptism, nor is it admissible except in a qualified sense. It certainly was not an ordinance by which the first baptists entered into church fellowship, for into what church did the disciples of John enter by baptism? Was Jesus Christ admitted a member of a christian church by baptism? Or into what church did the Eunuch enter, when Philip alone baptised him in the desert. Believers indeed entered on a public profession of christianity in general by baptism, and that was all. If some were added to the church immediately after baptism, it may not be amiss to recollect, that it was immediately after a sermon too, and if this connection of events afforded any argument for the nature and place of baptism, it might as well be applied to the nature and place of a sermon, and preaching might be denominated an initiating ordinance. The truth is, preaching produced conversion, conversion baptism, baptism acquaintance and conversation with church members, and conversation church fellowship. When we receive and use an ordinance for all the ends

for which it was instituted, we have done all that is required of us; but when we employ it to other ends, the least that can be said of us is, we are wise above what is written. Zeal may animate us; but even zeal, when it does not follow knowledge, will misguide us.

General and vague as this description of the law of baptism is, it is sufficient for all the ends, for which we produce it: however, it may serve to elucidate our meaning, if we be more explicit.

We affirm, then, that baptism is not a church ordinance, that it is not naturally, necessarily, and actually connected with church fellowship, and consequently that the doctrine of initiating into the christian church by baptism is a confused association of ideas, derived from masters whose disciples it is no honour to be.

Baptism, we allow, is a positive institute of the New Testament, and ought to be practised till the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; but, that it is not a New Testament *church* ordinance is clear, for it was administered several years before the Jewish economy was dissolved, and consequently before there were any such congregated societies in the world as we call christian churches. When John the Baptist came first preaching and baptizing, Jesus, who afterward founded the christian church, lived a private life at Nazareth; he did not enter on his ministry till the death of John, and he did not dissolve the Jewish ecclesiastical state till his own death. People were baptized all this time on a general profession of faith in the Mes-

siah, and repentance towards God. This notion of baptism was preserved after the resurrection of Christ, and after christian churches had been congregated by his order, as appears by the baptism of the Eunuch, who indeed made a profession of faith, but was not associated to any particular christian church.

Much has been said, in pretended proof of the place of baptism, concerning the order of Christ's words in that commission to baptise, which he gave his apostles; it is recorded in the last chapter of Matthew: but, if this trite method of reasoning amounted to argument, we might form one thus. Christ instituted the Lord's supper before his death. Christ made baptism a positive christian institute after his resurrection. Therefore the Lord's supper ought to be received before we are baptized.

In a word, the law of christian baptism is, that believers in Christ should publickly avow their faith in him, and their resolution to obey him, by being baptized; and the proper time for this is after believing and before admission to fellowship: however, as there was no original and actual, so there is no natural and necessary connection between baptism and fellowship. Baptism was an initiation into the profession of christianity at large, not into the practice of it in any particular church.

This is the law, and, we think, the whole law of baptism, and we plead this law in favour of the right of unbaptized believers to the Lord's supper, for two plain and obvious reasons. 1. A command to perform one duty is not a prohibition of

another duty. *Keep the sabbath-day holy* is one command, and *honour thy father* is another: but, as there is no necessary connection between the two, a breach of the first does not release from an obligation to the last. Baptism and the Lord's supper are both commanded; but a law to perform one does not prohibit the observance of the other: the unbaptized believer's way to the Lord's table is therefore clear. 2. It is remarkable, that this positive law of baptism is not enforced by any penalties, and herein it differs from all other positive institutes. By what right then do we affix to the breach of it such a severe penalty as exclusion from church fellowship? After all, our candidates neither deny the right of Christ to give laws, nor that he hath given the law of baptism, nor that they are bound to obey it; their error lies in an innocent mistake concerning the proper subject, and the right mode of administering it. There is no penalty affixed to this mistake, and one law is not a prohibition or repeal of another law.

Fourthly: we argue for the right of our candidates *from the law of gifts.* When Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, he gave gifts unto men for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the general body of christians. To one he gave a discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, one had a gift of psalmody, another a doctrine, and another an interpretation, and when the whole church came together into one place, all these gifts were directed to the publick edification.

It is the opinion of some, that all these spiritual

gifts have been continued in the church in some degree ever since, and it is the thankful acknowledgment of all, that a part of them have been perpetuated to this day. Whatever general gifts men receive from God, they receive under a natural obligation of employing and improving them, of improving them for themselves, and employing them for the benefit of others; and whatever special ecclesiastical abilities good men receive from Christ the lord of the church, they receive both under a general obligation to use them, and under a special scriptural law to employ them in the church for the edification of the body.

Some unbaptized believers have received out of the fulness of Christ spiritual abilities; one hath a gift of psalmody, another a comprehensive knowledge of christian theology, and an aptitude to teach it to others, a third excels in spiritual discernment, and so on; and we have four remarks to make on their case.

1. The want of baptism does not incapacitate these men. The vigour of mental operations is not impaired by this defect. Neither fancy, judgment, memory, penetration, freedom of speech, courage, nor any other excellence, that goes into the composition of a spiritual gift, is annihilated or debilitated on that account; so that they are sufficient to the work of edifying the body of Christ.

2. There is no express law in the New Testament, no prohibition against the use of these abilities on account of the imperfection of baptism,

no precedent of exclusion, no trace or distant hint of any such thing.

3. There is an express law given to persons, who have spiritual gifts, to make use of them. They are not only *given to every man to profit withal*, but a positive command is issued, that they should employ them in the church for general advantage. Call all these abilities of unbaptized believers *one talent*, if you please, and suppose the baptist bro ther to have two, it will yet follow, that the one talent should not be hid in a napkin, but put to use, that, when the Lord comes, he may receive his own with improvements.

4. Christian societies cannot regularly employ these gifts among themselves, unless they admit the persons, who have them, to fellowship. An unbaptized believer, having spiritual abilities, would not proceed regularly, if he were to begin by demanding of the church a right to exercise his gifts among them for the publick benefit, according to Christ's command. He should first demand fellowship. In such a case a people would reason justly if they allowed, that such a man had a right to exercise his abilities in the church; that the church was obliged by law to allow and direct the exercise; that they had no jurisdiction except over their own members, and consequently that right to exercise spiritual gifts included in itself right to church fellowship. The law, that obliges the candidate to exercise his gifts in the church, and the law, that commands the church to employ him and to direct the exercise, both include in them-

selves an obligation to fellowship: they oblige a candidate to join a church, and they oblige a church to admit him.

All our churches allow and employ neighbouring independent ministers to preach to them, and daily express a high and just regard for their useful labours; yet, in their opinion, these men are unbaptized; now we only ask such a toleration for members of their own congregations, as they daily exercise toward ministers of other congregations, and we urge this for the former, because by their conduct to the latter they prove, that they do not hold the want of baptism to be either a natural or a legal incapacity.

Fifthly: let us advert to the *law of constitution.*

When the compassion of Christ induced him to descend into Judea to recover a profligate world to order, he brought along with him three sorts of excellencies; a body of perfect wisdom, an assortment of holy affections, and a set of upright actions. Some degree of each of these he imparted to his disciples, and they to others, as assisted by his divine influence. All believers, therefore, have a threefold union to Christ; an union of sentiment, for they believe what he believed and taught; an union of affection, for they love and hate what he loved and hated; what gave him pleasure gives them pleasure, and what grieved him gives them pain; and an union of practice, for they form their lives on his example. Hence arises an union to one another, as well as an union of all to Christ the head.

It is not imaginable, that any of the disciples of Christ possess these excellencies in such perfection as he possessed them; nor is it to be supposed, that all possess them in such eminent degrees as some do; however, there is a general excellence, a supreme love to truth and virtue, *religious principle*, if you will, in all believers, on which the christian church is constituted.

All the laws of constituting new testament churches are formed on this just notion of sacred social union, and our argument turns on the sufficiency of this *general excellence*, which is common to all believers, for all the ends and purposes of church fellowship.

The kingdom of Christ is an empire of truth and virtue, and it is not necessary to a residence in this kingdom that men should be perfect in either. A supreme love to truth as far as we know it, and a conscientious attachment to virtue as far as we have discovered it, are high qualifications, and all-sufficient for the duties and enjoyments of church communion. Now these are always found in the persons, for whose right we are pleading. They are partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel; they have heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation; the eyes of their understanding are enlightened; they know the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; they have been quickened together with Christ; and are made nigh by his blood; they have access by one spirit unto the Fa-

ther, and therefore they ought not to be accounted any more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

Persons thus qualified are equal to every duty of church fellowship, to singing, prayer, hearing and even preaching the word, receiving the Lord's supper, visiting the sick, relieving the poor, in a word, to all the duties men owe as church members to themselves, to one another, and to God.

They, who answer such descriptions, are so very like the primitive christians, that, it must be allowed, the inducement to receive them into church fellowship is exceedingly strong, so strong, that nothing short of an express prohibition seems sufficient to their exclusion.

Here is one article, it will be said, in which these believers do not answer the description of the primitive christians; they have not been baptized by immersion: but, let it be observed, that baptism strictly speaking is neither repentance towards God, nor faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; it is only a *profession* of these graces, and church fellowship seems in the very nature of the thing to be connected with the *graces*, and neither with this, nor with any other peculiar mode of professing them. We are sure, the church triumphant is formed on a connection between grace and glory; a profession of grace sometimes accompanying the connection, and sometimes not, and we

are taught to pray, *thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Right to church fellowship either lies in grace alone, or in baptism alone, or in both united, or in something beyond them all. If it lie in grace alone, then faith in Christ and moral obedience have a merit in them, and church fellowship is a reward due to such merit. A humble christian will not allow this. If it lie in baptism alone, then an irreligious person may get himself baptized, and claim his right to church communion. If it lie in grace and baptism united, then a worse idea of merit than the former will return, for then it will follow, that baptism gives grace its value; but this is inadmissible. The truth is, right to church communion lies in that royal charter, which the clemency of God hath granted to mankind, and by which persons of certain descriptions, though imperfect in knowledge, defective in obedience, and incompassed with many infirmities, are allowed the favour of approaching him through the merit of Jesus Christ. Title to fellowship lies in the divine charter, meetness for it in personal qualification.

This qualification, which I call *grace, general excellence, religious principle, supreme love to truth and virtue,* perfect in kind, imperfect in degree, is essential to church fellowship, and the law of Christ is, that his churches should be constituted, of only such persons as actually possess this real sterling goodness, which, being sufficient to

answer all the ends for which churches are constituted, ought always to be considered as a clear warrant to admit to fellowship. Of such persons the primitive churches were constituted, and nothing can be clearer, than the divine testimony, that against such as these, who bring forth the spiritual fruits of *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.*

Finally: we urge in behalf of our candidates, the law of *release* and *deprivation.* We put these two together, because release from duty includes in it a deprivation of benefits. Jesus Christ found mankind in slavery; his gospel finds a sinner in that condition still: but he both manumits and enfranchises this slave, he frees him from bondage, and invests him with privileges and immunities. This is done in the moment of regeneration, and henceforward this man ceaseth to be a servant of men in religious matters. He ceaseth to be his own, he becomes a subject of him, who died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living. The highest authority binds him to duty, and endows him with privilege, and none but the highest authority can deprive him of one, or release him from the other. This undeniable fact is full to our purpose.

This argument is taken from that obligation, under which the legislator hath laid every good man, to perform the *moral* as well as the positive duties of church fellowship, and from which obligation neither their own imperfections, nor any church

acts of ours, can or ought to discharge them. If we refuse to admit the believers in question into church fellowship, they owe us none of the *moral* duties, which belong to *that* condition, and it would be unreasonable in us to require them. When they build places of worship, support ministers, use hospitality, provide utensils for the celebration of ordinances, contribute toward maintaining the poor and relieving the sick members of the church, they do nothing but their duty, if they themselves be members; but, if they be denied the benefit of membership, all these are works of supererogation. Now we argue, that God hath connected in the holy scriptures duty with benefit, and that, having enjoined the duties on all believers, he intended all believers should reap the benefit of performing them. The Lord's supper is both a duty and a benefit; Christ requires all his disciples to partake of the Lord's supper; but, if we deny them the benefit, we discharge them from the duty; and the same may be said of all other church duties and benefits. Now, as we pretend to no authority to release from duty, how is it possible we should claim an authority to deprive of benefit?

Many of these duties are moral duties, of natural and immutable obligation; and such is the absolute necessity of obedience to them, that, when a man is so circumstanced as to be obliged either to omit a moral duty or a positive precept, the latter is in all cases to give way to the former. If obedience to positive precepts must subside to make room for obedience to moral precepts, how

is it possible to conceive, that innocent ignorance of a *positive* precept should become a release from *moral* obligations; and such are many of the duties of church fellowship.

Waiving for the present a multitude of arguments fairly and honestly deducible from scripture source, such as *the law of positive institutes*, and others, the sum of what we have said from the oracles of God is this. God, a being possessed of all possible perfections, is the author of christianity, the founder and friend of the christian church. He displayed the magnificence of his perfections in framing the whole, and continues to display it in governing every part. The same attributes, that pervade and direct all his natural empire, constitute and guide his moral dominion in the church. His wisdom leaves difficulties and obstacles, to us as immoveable as the decrees of fate; but he leaves them to excite and improve our mental abilities and moral excellencies, which he intends we should employ in diminishing them. His perfect justice never disqualifies without a crime. His benevolence produces the greatest social good. His love of holiness distinguishes the righteous from the wicked, and his patience and compassion bear with imperfections, both of knowledge and virtue: hence we have inferred, that the admitting of an unbaptized believer to church fellowship is, ON THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY, a wise, a just, a benevolent, a holy, a humane action.

We have gone further; we have examined many EXPRESS LAWS, given in writing by Jesus Christ

to his church for the more easy administration of justice in it. There are laws of exclusion; but unbaptized believers are not in the list. There are laws of toleration, which actually include their case. There is a law of baptism; but this does not repeal any other law, nor prohibit the observance of any other positive institute. There is a law for the exercise of gifts, in which the incorporation of some is included; and there is the law of constitution, which authorizes the incorporation of all good men. We have examined, finally, the law of release and deprivation, and we have thence inferred that the interests of morality, and the pleasures of christianity, if not diminished by excluding these persons, would, however, be greatly promoted by admitting them. We do not presume to have exhausted the subject; there remain many more reasons for the practice, which we have been defending; but these are satisfactory to us, and, we think, they deserve consideration by our brethren: however, the writer of this does not mean to lengthen out the controversy; and, he hopes, should any think proper to deny all he has affirmed, no offence will be taken at his future silence. He would not seem to slight the admonitions of any good man; but, on this article, his judgment is settled; he has only to add, *Grace be with all them, that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!*

## CONCLUSION.

We will, then, close this subject with a few remarks once for all. Impartial justice obliges us to declare, that all our congregations, whether they tolerate infant baptism in their own communities or not, are warm friends to civil and religious liberty, and to universal toleration in *a state*. Even in popery, that worst of all pretended christianity, they distinguish the religion from the civil polity incorporated with it, and would tolerate the former, while they execrate the latter, as men and as Britons.

An apology, too, ought to be made for their refusing to tolerate infant baptism in their own churches. Sprinkling is so different from dipping, the incorporating of infants by sprinkling into the christian church is so incompatible with the nature of a rational religion to be received and professed on a conviction of the truth and excellence of it; the new testament is so utterly unacquainted with infant sprinkling, the arguments brought to support it are so weak and far-fetched, the concessions of learned divines are so numerous, and the mischiefs attending it so notorious, that they may well be excused for their aversion to it.

Again: Christ's right of legislation is so clear, the perfection of the scriptures so fully ascertained, the dipping of adults on their own personal profession of faith and repentance so plain, the honour put upon this institution by the example of Jesus Christ so conspicuous, the pleasure enjoyed

by large congregations in hearing persons profess faith and repentance so refined, and the heart-felt satisfaction of conscientiously adminstering and receiving this ordinance so invigorating, heightened too by a consciousness of disinterested motives, capable of suffering the cross and despising the shame of popular ridicule and censure;—all these are so forcible, that we must not be too severe on the men, who, in the transports of their zeal, considering themselves as the only defenders of this part of primitive religion, hold infant sprinkling in abhorrence, and refuse to tolerate it in their churches.

Further: The whole denomination has, through successive ages, been misrepresented, and treated with more partiality and rigour than any other nonconformists. They were generally nicknamed *anabaptists*, or people who baptized twice, because they baptized some people once, who had been sprinkled in infancy, which sprinkling in their opinion was no baptism at all. Orthodox writers against heresy always took care to put anabaptists into the list of most pestilent hereticks, because they exploded that impenetrable jargon, which the schools had incorporated with christianity. Writers on church government abused them as fomenters of anarchy, enemies to monarchy, and abettors of republicansim, because they detested despotism, and denied the authority of civil magistrates over conscience in matters of religion. Ecclesiastical historians affirmed, they were atheists, antinomians and libertines, because

they thought universal toleration in a state a necessary part of sound civil polity. The literati slandered them as an ignorant illiterate crew, because they constantly affirmed, that the New Testament was a book so plain, and the religion of it so easy, that any man of common sense might understand it, if he would. Priests calumniated them as an uncandid, sour, malignant, implacable sect, because they thought christianity unchangeable, and compliance and compliments crimes in religion. The gay world called them morose and unsociable, and laughed at their want of taste for rhymes, and novels, and plays, and places of fashionable dissipation, and every coquet exclaimed,—Come into the world without christening, and go out of it without burying! Lord have mercy upon an anabaptist's soul! Do we wonder that such men refuse to tolerate infant sprinkling!

Moreover, they have been distinguished from all other protestants as men the least deserving of equity or pity, and that by protestants too, from whom better treatment might have been expected. Even Cranmer thought it no crime to burn an anabaptist woman, and his bloody example was imitated both by Queen Elizabeth and King James I. Some of this denomination were the last that were burnt for religion; and since they were allowed to die in their beds, their corpses were denied the right of what is called christian burial.

Even good men, men, who in all other respects behaved with the dignity of men, and the delicacy of christians, frequently caught the fashionable

*ton,* and treated this denomination with an insolence truly provoking. They suffered themselves, against the just and humane feelings of their own good hearts, to be made the dupes of interested leaders, who were blinded with prejudice, bloated with pride, and void of every principle except love of self. Let us cease to wonder then, that some baptists treat infant sprinkling with peculiar dislike, and refuse to put it among the errors, that may be tolerated in their communities. It is an excess; but it is an excess of virtue, and excessive virtue is the most pardonable of all vices.

After all, an extreme aversion to one particular error may have arisen from an innocent *association of ideas,* which have no natural, no necessary, nor scriptural connection. *Initiation* into church communion and *baptism* are not always connected together in scripture; but they have always appeared in company in the church of Rome; so the reformers found them, and so they kept them in the churches, which they framed, and perhaps we may have derived them from thence; if so, the sooner we dissociate these two ideas the better. In this case, the ordinance would be placed in our churches precisely in that state, in which it was originally fixed. Sometimes it would be connected with church-fellowship, at other times it would not; but at all times it would be primitive publick profession of faith in Christ, highly honourable to him who made it.

Again: It is not impossible, that *strict communion* and *modesty* may have associated themselves

in the minds of some. A modest minister of this opinion, in close connection with others of the same opinion, may look with too much reverence on his fathers and brethren, and think it would be arrogant in him to introduce what would appear to them, he fears, a mark of folly and rashness. A needless blush this among the most placid and friendly of mankind!

Perhaps, also, *mixed communion* and *licentiousness* may have been associated by some, because they have observed some particular cases, in which it has not been conducted with wisdom and prudence; but we should distinguish the use of every thing from the abuse of it.

Further: Perhaps *toleration of sprinkling* and *want of zeal* for primitive baptism may have been associated in the minds of some; but this connection is not just, for they, who practise free communion, have discovered as much zeal for the ordinance as their brethren of the contrary opinion.

Probably, *mixed fellowship* and *great majorities* of unbaptized believers, tending to alter the constitution of a church, may have been associated ideas; but, whatever may have happened in some few particular cases, the connection is not good, for in most mixed churches, where the minister is a baptist, the proportion is not so great as five to a hundred.

I sometimes imagine, I see a pastor of a strict church, consisting of two hundred members, sitting in his chair at a church-meeting, his members all present. I fancy, I see a venerable, grey headed

old gentleman rise, and hear him inform the church, that five gentlemen, and five ladies, now in an adjoining room, desired to be admitted into the assembly to make a profession of their faith in Christ, and repentance toward God, and to *declare in the gates of Sion what the Lord had done for their souls*, in order to their admission to fellowship, adding, that they resided in the neighbourhood, constantly attended divine worship in that place, and were well known to have undoubted piety and unspotted morality. They held, indeed, infant sprinkling for christian baptism; however, that was no obstacle to him, and he proposed them as members fit to be tolerated in a new testament church. Their names were John Calvin, the reformer, William Tindall, the translator of the bible, John Owen, vice-chancellor of the learned university of Oxford, Matthew Henry, the expositor, and Isaac Watts, the composer of the psalms and hymns on the table. The ladies were Thecla the writer of the Alexandrian manuscript, Mary, Countess Dowager of Warwick, Lady Mary Vere, Lady Mary Armyne, and Mrs. Margaret Baxter, whose praises were in all the churches.... The old man moves that they be admitted, and sits down. I fancy a solemn silence ensues.... the feelings of the heart rebel against opinion.... I imagine, I see in the lower seats tears of gratitude flow from the eyes of industrious labourers employed, widows and orphans fed and cloathed, and youths educated by the christian liberality of some of the ladies. In nearer pews stern justice sits voting in the fea-

tures of fathers grown wise by the labours of others of the candidates · · · · The junior members smile affection at the name of Watts, and their parents melt at the sight, venerating a man, who allured their much loved offspring out of the world into the principles of religion, and so into the church · · · · The seven venerable deacons, just at the grave, to them the gate of heaven, catch the fire of a holy ambition to enjoy the great accession of knowledge and virtue, that knocks at their door for admission! · · · · their souls are in their countenances; they are ready to break the silence with "*Lord! now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace, our eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*" And you · · · · Pastor of the church · · you · · who are both a *guide of the blind, and a teacher of babes* · · · · what will you do? Rise from your seat · · · · Stand up, and *shew* your people *the way of salvation;* collect the votes of justice, gratitude and love; *open the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in.* Were the apostle Peter in your place, he would say, *God hath shewn me, that I should not call any man common or unclean. Of a truth, I perceive, God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he gave us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what am I that I should withstand God?* Yea, were *the chief shepherd and bishop of souls* there,

would not the goodness of his heart expand his arms, and distil from his lips in accents melodious as these, *Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was a stranger, and ye took me in?*

The heart in some cases is a good casuist; and will teach us many things worth our attention. The experience of every christian minister teaches him, that the increase of Christ's visible kingdom is the most desirable of all events; it is the end of all his labours and wishes; consequently his own feelings will urge him to render an admission to church fellowship as easy and accessible to genuine christians as in truth and conscience he can; conscience I say, not merely his own, for, while he provides for the peace of that, he should take care he does not offer violence to that of his brother.

Many pious persons have found, by their own experience, that there are several difficulties to surmount in joining a christian church; obstacles in themselves, obstacles in their worldly connections, and obstacles thrown in their way by the tempter: now what encouragement have this excellent class of men to surmount all these obstacles, if, after all, they cannot be admitted into a christian church, not indeed on account of any positive sin laid to their charge, but because they are supposed to possess a less degree of knowledge than the rest of their brethren?

The particular experience of enlarged and liberal minds seems to assort so well with the temper and disposition of Jesus Christ, and to be attended with

so many beneficial consequences to the church, that it may justly occasion a doubt, at least, whether prejudice and temper may not have mixed with piety and benevolence, and abated the vigorous exertion of them in the investigation of this question.

Universal experience may serve to convince us, that the christian church, struggling against principalities, and powers, and wicked geniusses in high places, in one common cause for truth and virtue against error and vice, ought to collect all its force, that it may repel the general foe.

We want only the will to excel all other reformed churches, the power is in our hands. In this view we congratulate our brethren on the innumerable blessings, which as Britons and christians they enjoy. One of the chief is that of free religious controversy, by which we lead one another into the truth. The book of divine revelation lies open to us, and on this account our condition is better than that of the pagans. Liberty of reading that, and all other books, is also ours, and so we are in a state better than that of the Spaniards and Portugueze, who are obliged to purchase from the holy office a licence to read all books. The French, who have the scriptures, and who, consequently, if they read, must judge of their meaning, are not allowed to act on any principles of their own different from such as are established by law: but this is not our case. We are not even obliged to procure an *imprimatur*, as our ancestors were; but we may read, we may reason, we may lay down principles, draw conclusions, make our conclu-

sions grounds of action, both act on them ourselves, and persuade others by preaching and printing to do so too.

This noble constitutional right, like every other gift of providence, may be a blessing, and it may not. If, on the one hand, men, who may be so free, choose to live in slavery, and to wear the fetters of prejudice and custom rather than give themselves the trouble of knocking off their chains, beside losing all the pleasure of conscious rectitude here, assuredly they will hereafter meet with the reproach of the *slothful and wicked servant*, mentioned in the gospel, who did not use his Lord's talent. If, on the contrary, we pervert this liberty into licentiousness, and gratify the violent passions of a depraved heart under colour of searching for truth, and defending it when found, we turn our blessing into a curse. May we be kept from both these extremes; and *may the Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into a patient waiting for Christ, who, when he cometh, will tell us all things!*

FINIS.

# SERMONS

ON

# *VARIOUS OCCASIONS.*

[FIRST SEPARATELY PRINTED.]

# ADVERTISEMENT.

*THE following Sermon was preached at an* annual *meeting, to a society of* youths, *which may apologize for its length; and which the candid will consider as an excuse for whatever may appear exotic: what would have been impertinent to others, may be allowed (we presume) not improper to the young and inexperienced. It is printed now, because "the best service we can do our country is "to form the manners of youth, especially in these "times of luxury, in which all manner of helps "are necessary to bridle and restrain their impe-"tuosity." That this weak effort may serve that purpose is the earnest prayer of*

R. ROBINSON.

*Cambridge, Jan. 17th,* 1772.

Ye shall command your children to observe to do all the words of this law; for it is not a vain thing for you: it is your life. Deut. xxxii.

Quod enim munus reipublicæ afferre majus meliusve possumus, quam si deceamus atque erudiamus JUVENTUTEM; his præsertim moribus atque temporibus, quibus ita prolapsa est, ut omnium opibus refrænanda atque coercenda sit? Cic. de Div. Lib. ii. 4.

# SERMON I.

## THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF EARLY PIETY.

[Preached to a Society of young people, at *Willingham, Cambridgeshire*, on the first day of the year 1772.]

PSALM cxliv. 11, 12.

*Rid me, and deliver me from strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth: that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.*

HAVE you never observed, my christian brethren, the wisdom and severity of that punishment which the law of Moses inflicted on a disobedient son? *If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard: and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die.*

*So shalt thou put away evil from among you : and all Israel shall hear and fear.* This is a very severe law ; it seems at first alike to violate the light of nature and the law of love. Every parent recoils at the thought of correction: a religious parent is particularly averse to it, for he knows the infirmities of human nature, and makes the proper allowances. If a father could execute so severe an office, is it not an excess of severity to require a mother's concurrence ? all tenderness as she is, must she have *no compassion on the son of her womb?* must she *become cruel like the ostrich in the wilderness?* Was it only a private correction, or known only to domestics, it would be painful ; but here the parents must expose the criminal, and publish the crime, as well to the censorious populace as to the inflexible magistrates of the place: yea, the doleful history must be told, and re-told through all the tribes of Israel, that *all may hear and fear.* Had the law stopped here, it would have been extremely mortifying; but it proceeded to a shocking death, not by the hand of an executioner rendered dreadfully skilful by practice, but any man, every man, *all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die.*

Severe as this law was of itself, it might become much more so by circumstances. What if this rebellious son was handsome, his features regular, his mien genteel, his address easy and affable; (and sometimes all these qualities are blended with immorality,) would it not distress one to see so much beauty overwhelmed with so much in-

famy? What if the natural abilities of his mind were great? if greatness of capacity, fruitfulness of invention; if all that forms a superior genius was united in this lovely youth with disobedience; (and this you know is sometimes the case) would it not render the execution still more distressing? What if a liberal education had cultivated his natural abilities! If he had been *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, a linguist, an astronomer, a philosopher, a first rate scholar; (alas my brethren, some of the finest scholars have been *gluttons and drunkards!)* would not his death have been more horrid still? Suppose him the son of a noble family, whose ancestors had held the first rank in the state, or the highest offices in the church. Suppose him an only son, on whom, as on an axis, all the hopes of the family rolled. Suppose him ..... but we need not proceed; enough has been said to convince you that severity marks this law, and that Moses when he received it had reason to exclaim, *I exceedingly fear and quake!*

Yet, this law, with all its severity, was full of wisdom. The more interests involved in the punishment, the stronger the motives to avoid it. The Mosaic œconomy was calculated for the temporal prosperity, as well as for the eternal felicity of the Jews: now nothing is more closely connected with both, than the religious education of children; and to secure that was the design of this institution. None of these public punishments were to be inflicted till private corrections had been repeatedly tried: if all means used to instil virtue, or to re-

form vice proved ineffectual, then, but never till then, was this sacrifice to be made for the public good: then the unhappy youth was to terrify by his death, those whom he had refused to edify by his life. What parent, foreseeing the consequences, could refuse to watch over his son night and day? Who but would avail himself of all the softness and docility of childhood, of every method of insinuation and instruction, of all the power of a good example? in a word, who but would attempt every thing to rescue a child from this calamity? lest, great as the affliction might be of itself, it should be still increased by reflecting that the negligence of the father was the murder of the son. In such a case, citizens around and conscience within, like thunder claps redoubled, would reproach a parent: his ears, and his heart would tingle with *destruction upon destruction. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee. This is thy wickedness. It is bitter, it reacheth unto thine heart.*

Not only was this law intended to interest parents in the education of their children in general, but it was also particularly pointed at that part of parental conduct, which, of all others, is the most fatal to youth, I mean, a foolish fondness. If severity hath slain its thousands, indulgence hath slain its ten thousands. Human nature seems even in its infancy conscious of its dignity, that it was formed to govern, not to truckle. Very early therefore it assumes authority. Parents should direct this noble natural dictate to its proper ob-

ject. Instead of submitting to be governed by their children, they should teach their children to govern themselves. If it can be done by mildness well: if not, severity must be tried. The author of this law perfectly understood human nature, and wisely directed a parent how to avoid a penalty, which might at once be both a motive and a law. *If when they have chastened him he will not hearken to them; then shall they bring him out.*

Yea, in case of a public execution, the worst issue that parental negligence and youthful obstinacy could come to here; even in such a case, the statute is stamped with the legislator's wisdom: the carelessness of one might rouse thousands into activity; the death of one might spare an infinite number of lives; for *all Israel shall hear and fear.*

*All Israel shall hear and fear.* Should Israel refuse attention to this important subject; should Israel *count the things* of God's *law strange things;* should Israel *lothe her husband and her children,* she would deserve the keen reproach of the prophet, *Thou hast not walked after the ways of the heathen, nor done after their abominations; but as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they all in thy ways:* for the heathens abounded with sage maxims on this head, and thought "the most diligent use of them "scarcely sufficient to restrain the corruption of "human nature."* Some of their wisest lawgivers

* Μολις γαρ αν τις εκ ταυτης της επιμελειας τας της ΦΥΣΕΩΣ ΑΜΑΡΤΙΑΣ επικρατησειεν. Isoc. ad. Demon. Idem ad Nicoc. 1. Xenoph. Memorab. Lib. I. cap. 2. Lib. iv. cap. 2. Plut. de educ. lib.

precluded the ill consequences of parental weakness by forbidding a private education, by making the instruction of children an affair of state, and by imposing laws of this kind under the most rigorous penalties: so far from tolerating a careless loose education, they have been thought to carry their severities even too far.* Heathens of the highest rank, and of both sexes have educated their children themselves:† and knowing the futility of precept without example, have governed themselves with a scrupulous delicacy for their children's sakes.‡ Their historians ascribe their national grandeur to an universal virtue instilled in childhood; and to the want of it, the worst agree with the wisest in ascribing their national ruin.§

* Solon, Lycurgus, &c.

† As Aurelia the mother of Julius Cæsar. Attia the mother of Augustus. Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi. Dial. de orat. cap. xxviii.—The mother of Agricola. Tacit. vit. Agric. cap. iv.—The father of Atticus. Corn. Nep. in vita Attici. cap. I.—The Emperor Augustus himself educated Caius, and Lucius, whom he had adopted. Sueton. in vit. Aug. cap. lxiv.

‡ Cato Censor tanti exempli fuit, ut Manlium senatu moverit, quod interdiu PRÆSENTE FILIA uxorem suaviasset: asserens se a sua nunquam nisi cum tonaret præ timore complexum esse. Et II. Epicharmum comicum mulctasse et pœna affecisse dicitur, quod CORAM FILIA lascivos edidisset versus. Alex. ab Alex. gen. dier. lib. ii. cap. xxv. Plut. vit. Catonis Cens. Utinam liberorum nostrorum mores non ipsi perderemus, &c. Quint. Inst. lib. i. cap: 2. See Juv. Sat. xiv.

§ Bello et pace, foris et domi, omnem in partem Romana virtus tum se approbavit. Flor. i. 18.

Postquam, remoto metu punico, majorum mores non paulatim, ut antea, sed torrentis modo præcipitati: adeo JUVEN-

David, who, besides possessing all the natural sagacity and penetration of a great prince in common with the heathens, was inspired with the holy spirit; David, I say, knew the importance of a good education, and in this psalm tells you, how closely personal, domestic, and national happiness, are connected with it.

This psalm is the language of a prince who wished his people's prosperity: that their *garners might be full of all manner of stores;* that their *sheep might bring forth thousands and ten thousands in their streets:* that their *oxen* might be fat for slaughter, or *strong for labour:* that there might be neither robbery nor beggary in their

TUS luxu atque avaritia corrupta est, uti merito dicatur, genitos esse, qui neque ipsi habere possent res familiares, neque alios pati. Inter fragm. Sallustii.—To the same purpose, Polybius, Livy, Tacitus, and others; the last of whom hath this remarkable sentence: nec enim unquam atrocioribus pop. R. caldibus, magisve justis judiciis approbatum est, none esse curæ deis securitatem nostram, esse *Ultionem.* Hist. I. 3.

Hence the Satyrist,

Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna,
. . . NEC PUERI CREDUNT. . . .
Sed tu vera puta. Curius quid sentit, et ambo
Scipiadæ? Quid Fabricius, manesq; Camilli?
Quid cremeræ legio, et Cannis consumpta JUVENTUS,
Tot bellorum animæ?

Juv. Sat. II. v. 149.

IMBERBIS JUVENIS, tandem custode remoto,
Gaudet equis, canibusque, et aprici gramine campi, &c.

Hor. de art. poet. 161.

streets: no oppressive magistrates, nor complaining people: and as if all these blessings were to be derived from the character of the people, and the character of the people from the education they had received, our text is a prayer for the youth of Judea. *Deliver me from the hand of strange children, that our sons may be as plants,* and so on.

If this psalm was composed in David's old age, it was the voice of his own experience, as well as of observation, history, and inspiration. Not only had he observed the happiness of him whose *wife was a fruitful vine by the sides of his house;* whose *children were like olive plants round about his table,* thriving under a wise culture: not only had he heard the fatal effects of Eli's negligence; but his own indulgence of his son Adonijah, had well nigh cost him his crown and life: *him, his father had not displeased at any time, in saying, why hast thou done so:* a sad experience therefore had taught him, that it is not enough for God to give a man *victory* over his enemies; (this indeed he is thankful for) but he must also have œconomy in his family to make him truly happy. What parent in this assembly is insensible to this? Yes, young people; *children which God hath graciously given his servants;* we bow our knees to the Father of heaven, and bless him for our past deliverances, present enjoyments, and future hopes; yet how shall we sing the Lord's song, when *he calleth as in a solemn day our terrors round about,* when *those that we have swaddled and brought up,*

*the enemy* of souls *consumeth? Now therefore stand still that we may reason with you before the Lord.* Blessed spirit, who knowest our utter inability to speak or hear as we ought; whose wisdom alone can dictate, whose power alone can impress thy word to saving purposes, mercifully enlighten our minds, and sanctify our hearts in this service. Amen.

To explain and inforce our text is all that will be attempted. It is necessary to explain it, that we may form a clear idea of the nature of early obedience: and to inforce it, that we may feel the necessity of reducing our knowledge to practice. These are the means of God's appointing, but as they are only means, I trust you will pray while we speak, that the Lord would make them effectual. May *he that dwelleth between the cherubims come and save you!*

*Rid and deliver me from strange children. Strange children,* either means foreigners, not natives of Judea,* but young people of neighbouring idolatrous nations; consequently, people whose notions about the deity and divine things, were erroneous, and whose company might therefore be dangerous to the sound *principles* of the Jewish youth; this perhaps is meant by their *mouth speaking vanity.* Or, by *strange children* we are to

* Alienum pro alienigena, seu *peregrino* ponitur. Ut in Isa. lxii. 8. in eodem sensu passim fere apud ethnicos sumitur.

Πτωχοι μεν ημεις κ) ΞΕΝΟΙ, ΞΕΝΟΣ δε σν.

Sophoc. Oed. Col. 1400.

understand, children not born in lawful marriage,* whose guilty parents, ashamed of such children, often abandon them to their natural propensities to vice, without being able to oppose a good example of their own, or an holy education by others. The company of such must be dangerous to the *morals* of the Jewish youth, for *their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.* Or the phrase *strange children,* may even mean those whose vicious inclinations defeat the best of educations.† From each of these the Psalmist prays to be delivered.

Free from evil company as a nursery from weeds and beggary, may *our sons grow up as plants in their youth;* may they acquire strength of body, and fruitfulness, or wisdom of mind. As trees take their form while young, and unless they thrive then never gain any considerable size after; so may our children profit early by the instructions of their parents and masters, for if that season of pliableness and docility be ineffectual, it is not likely that any after-instructions should avail.

May *our daughters be as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace;* that is, may they strengthen and adorn their families, their country, and the church of God; to which end may every thing that strengthens and adorns their bodies or their minds be perpetuated among them. Both these sentences are figurative; both in general are put for strength and beauty, among heathen as

* Filius alienæ, id est *filius meretricis.* Prov. vii. 5. pro scortis peregrina ponitur in Terentii Adrin. Eun. et Phorm.

† Jer. ii. 12. υιοι αλλωτριοι. Degeneres filii.

well as sacred writers.* Let us quit the figure and pursue the meaning. David prays for strength and beauty of *body*. Strength and beauty of *mind*. Strength and beauty of *moral virtue*. Strength and beauty of *true christianity*. When these things are found in youth, then do they resemble lofty timbers or richly-laden fruit trees; then are they the columns of a building, whose bases support, whose capitals adorn the whole: or, as our text expresseth it, then are *our sons as plants grown up in their youth, our daughters as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace.*

*Strength and beauty of body.* The human body is one of the Creator's noblest works, a compact and delicate machine, *fearfully and wonderfully* contrived at once to serve the Creator's glory and our utility. Ah! what pity that it should so often be debased to the vilest purposes! Did God *form the eye* to look mischief; or *plant the ear* to admit slander; or *make man's mouth* alternately to *bless God, and to curse men who are made after the similitude of God? I speak after*

* Pandarus et Bitias, Idæo Alcanore creti :
Quos Jovis eduxit luco sylvestris Hiera,
*Abietibus* JUVENES patriis et montibus equos.
Consurgunt geminæ *quercus*, &c.
Virg. Æn. Lib. ix. 672.
*Domus* Assaraci. Virg. Æ. 1. 287.
Homines ÆDIUM esse similes arbitremini,
Primum dum parentes fabri liberum sunt,
Et fundamentum substruunt liberorum.
Plaut. Most. A. 1. S. 2
Hinc columna familiæ. prov.

*the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness; even so yield your members servants to righteousness.* Young people reverence your bodies; avoid luxury which enervates, and practise temperance which preserves them.

Accustom yourselves to a temperate, frugal *diet.* Gluttony and drunkenness are odious vices in any, most of all detestable in young people; and what, think ye, is the high-road to these? is it not consulting the appetite more than the health? is it not tickling the palate with delicacies? and will not an immoderate use of even the most plain and simple foods conduct to the same end? A voracious appetite is a misfortune, a dainty one a curse, and a disposition to increase rather than diminish these evils, is devilish. How amiable the patriarchal simplicity! then a *little balm, and a little honey,* a few *nuts, spices, and almonds,* were presents for a prince. *A cake baked on the hearth,* veal served up with *butter and milk* was Abraham's feast when angels were his guests. Accordingly, they reaped the benefit of their frugality; they had *the blessings of heaven above, the blessings of the deep beneath, blessings of the breasts and the womb, their bows abode in strength, and the arms of their hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.* Have gluttony or drunkenness these advantages?

Accustom yourselves to a decent *dress.* Cleanliness we expect from the poorest, modesty and decency from the richest; some diseases follow rags

others robes: the way of health is the middle way, and excess does but anticipate old age, and meet its infirmities half-way. If fashion be your law, you are enslaved to a cruel task-master, whose precarious edicts, with all the penalties annexed to them, it will be your glory to free yourselves from: nor will your freedom cost you much; you cannot be at a loss for a guide: if no apostle will direct you, if no thoughtful heathen will direct you,* be instructed by those that have fallen a sacrifice to fondness for dress: see there, *instead of a sweet smell, a stink; instead of a girdle, a rent; instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.* In this age of luxury you need not look far for such sad examples as these.

Proper *exercise* is necessary for the health of your bodies. Idleness, which is an enemy to eve-

* Pythagoras Crotonam venit, populumque in luxuriam lapsum, auctoritate sua ad usum frugalitatis revocavit. Matronas pudicitiam, et obsequia in viros, pueros modestiam, et literarum studium docebat. Inter hæc velut genitricem virtutum frugalitatem omnibus ingerebat; consecutus que disputationum assiduitate erat, ut matronæ auratas vestes, cetera que dignitatis suæ ornamenta, velut instrumenta luxuriæ deponerent. . . . . præ se ferentes VERA ORNAMENTA MATRONARUM PUDICITIAM, NON VESTES ESSE.

Just. Hist. l. xx. c. 4. See 1. Pet. iii. 3, 4, 5.

Ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopolæ,
Mendici, mimæ, balatrones; hoc genus omne
Mœstum ac sollicitum est cantoris morte Tigelli:
Quippe benignus erat. Horat. Sat. i. 2.

ry thing good, is irreconcileable to health; nor is there a more pitiable character than a youth benumbed and stupified by this intoxicating folly. By indolence the noblest advantages of body are useless; while industry and application give superior places to inferior qualifications. One class of diseases await indolence; another violence; these are officers of the King of kings, placed on either side of the road to keep us in the only safe path. In lawful business, in proper relaxations, in every stage of life avoid these two extremes, nor suffer yourselves to be deluded with the false delicacies of this age of intemperance. When the ancient Romans wanted a dictator they fetched one from the plough: when man was in paradise he was ordered *to dress the garden and to keep it*: nobly exemplified by St. Paul, who could say, I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel, yea, you yourselves know that *these hands* have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me.

Let me add with the wise man, *love not sleep.* Much less is required for the health of the body than is generally allowed: yea, what is generally allowed, is perhaps one cause of the effeminacy and folly of the present times. So true is that saying, *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger!*

What contributes probably more than all to the health of the body is a proper government of the passions, abstaining from *youthful lusts, following after righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with*

*them that call on the Lord with a pure heart:* but this belongs to the mind. Without pursuing this subject any farther therefore, let us in general observe that on these depend the strength and beauty of the body: a slave to sensuality is a mere brute, his very shape is disguised; that the image of God should be debased into such brutality how dreadful! Is it the glory of the palate to relish poisons? of the eyes to be red with wine, or filled with adultery? Is sin the beauty or the deformity of the body? the decorum or the distortion of the features? Shew me a sensualist, and a child can answer, *whose image and superscription is this?*

The health and strength of his people's bodies may seem too trifling for David's concern. Not at all; he acts perfectly in character: it is the father of his people whose compassion, it is the Lord of his subjects whose policy, dictates the text. Health, and in order to that, temperance, is of the greatest importance in a state. Health makes a brave soldiery, a dauntless navy; husbandry in the country, and ingenuity in the city; the inventions of artists and the penetrations of scholars; manufactories at home and merchandise abroad, all depend on the health of the body; all are impracticable attempts without it. Old people are discharged from these, and youth must bear the heat and burden of all these; yet which of these is an intemperate youth fit for? Alas! like *salt that hath lost its savor, he is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill:* he renounces

at once the world and the church. Ah! when luxury hath enervated a youth, when to his anticipated old age *the grasshopper is a burden*, when *he* starts at *the voice of a bird*, would he be imprisoned for the truth, or burn in defence of it? Poor, timorous, fluctuating thing! too *tender and delicate to adventure to set the sole of its foot on the ground;* a little dirt is a *lion in the street;* a cloud affrights from a religious exercise; the heat of a crowded audience, the cold of a thin one, are hazards too great to run for the word of God; yea the rigour of the closet makes meditation and prayer impracticable. Is this, young men, is this *to grow up like plants in your youth?* Is this, young women, is this to be *polished after the similitude of a palace?*

We suppose in the next place that the Psalmist prayed for the *strength and beauty of his people's minds.* David was himself a man of fine genius, and a great part of the glory of his reign was owing to his discretion in employing the capacities of his people in their proper spheres: his generals were *lion-like men, as swift as roes upon the mountains;* he had a Joab over his host; Jehosaphat for a recorder; Shevah for a scribe; and Zadok for a priest; he found a Chenaniah to manage the vocal, and an Asaph to guide the instrumental music of the temple; he could tell his successor that there were *workmen with him in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work:* and this the scripture calls *executing judgment*

*and justice among his people.* We must suppose therefore, that the capacities of his people are intended, and aptly signified, by *planting* a tree, and *polishing* a stone, in the text.

The body is a curious machine of itself, but how it rises in value when impregnated with an immortal soul! Indeed all our notions about the soul are rather *negative* than *positive*, (forgive me these terms,) I mean, we can easier tell what it is not than what it is. It is immaterial, that is, it is not water, it is not air, it is not to be heard, seen, felt, measured, weighed, it is not like any thing that falls under the notice of our senses: but positively, what is a spirit no philosopher can define, no pencil describe. It is immortal, that is, it cannot die; but what is its life? In other things, *wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness*, but in this, *it happeneth to the wise even as to the fool.*

The soul, like the eye, seems formed to contemplate other objects, not itself; in contemplating them however, it finds itself capable of operations which no other being can perform. And indeed the more the soul reflects on its own operations, the more sublime and god-like does its nature appear: for in this, as in all other cases, sober reasoning conducts to revelation, nor stumbles at that declaration, *in the image of God created he him.* Inestimable jewel! Shouldest thou lay unnoticed, unpolished in a body, like a diamond in a rock? *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?*

Reflect a moment, my young friends, on the wonderful capability of your own minds. Every operation astonishes. Intelligence, for instance. How many thousand different things do your minds comprehend the nature, and general properties of? Earth, air, fire, water, trees, plants, flowers, birds, beasts, fishes, insects, *bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial, one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars.* Grand peculiarity! In this respect the poorest boy in the assembly surpasses the sun in excellence. The sun, all glorious as it is, can neither reflect on its own splendor, think of the moon, observe the planets, nor know any thing about the worlds it illuminates; but that poor boy can do all these things: the sun hath revolved on its axis many a century, but remembers nothing of all this; the sun will continue to revolve on its axis many a century still, but takes no pleasure in a prospect of its duration: alike incapable of sensation, reflection, and hope. No: this is your privilege, immortal youths, yours without distinction of rank, *from the first-born of him that sitteth upon his throne, to the first born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill.*

Be sensible of this dignity of your natures: know that this rich soil wants cultivating, and that we may apply to a neglected soul what the prophet says of a deserted, uncultivated country: *thorns shall come up in her palaces, and nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: it shall be an habitation for dragons, and a court for owls: the wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the*

*wild beasts of the island, the satyr shall cry to his fellow, the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest: there shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch: the streams shall be turned into pitch, and the dust into brimstone: he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness: the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

Would you avoid this? *Study your own genius.** God hath variegated the powers of the mind, as he hath the features of of the face. A great capacity is no merit to him that hath it; a narrow one no sin. In God's *great house, there are vessels of gold and of silver, of wood and of earth,* some for the noblest, and some for the meanest uses: it is not for man to say, *Why hast thou made me thus?* but *to purge himself that he may be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.* For want of studying their own capacities, how many have disgraced occupations to which they were not equal, when they might have excelled in others for which God had formed them! *Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds to hear the bleatings of the flocks? Why did Asher continue in harbor? or Dan remain in his ships?*

* Hanc habet vim præceptem Apollinis, quo monet, ut se quisque noscat. Non enim credo, id præcipit, ut membra nostra aut staturam figuramve noscamus. Cum igitur NOSCE TE, dicit, hoc dicit, NOSCE ANIMUM TUUM. Cicer. Tusc. Disp. i. 22.

When you know your own capacities, *improve them.* Other animals are instantly at the top of their perfection. The little bee bursts its cell, flies into the fields, collects wax and honey, returns to the hive, forms a cell of exact dimensions, stores it with honey, and improves no farther by age and experience: but it is not so with you; your powers improve by exercise, and exercise is essential to their improvement. If you would investigate truth you must accustom yourselves to reason: if you would have a tenacious memory, you must habituate yourselves to remember: would you have a lively imagination, exercise your fancy: all the operations of your minds, like the senses of your bodies, have their own proper objects: to be often turning them to these objects is your improvement.

*Avoid all that weakens and wastes your capacities.* Your minds, however expansive, have yet their limits: they are not, they cannot be equal to every thing. Without enquiring whether our fashionable diversions be compatible with reason or religion: whether cock-fighting, boxing, and such diversions of the poor savor most of reason or barbarity: whether card-playing, dancing, and other amusements of the rich belong to politeness or buffoonery:* without enquiring this, it is enough to say that they divide and dissipate the

* See what Tully calls HUMANITUR VIVERE, in Epist. Lib. vii. Ep. i.

Verum equitis quoque jam migravit AB AURE voluptas
Omnes AD incertos OCULOS, et gaudia vana.
Hor. Epist. L. ii. Ep. iii.

capacity, and in this case to dissipate is to destroy.

*Avoid the profanity of neglecting to ask the assistance of God by fervent prayer.* Pagans ascribe all their excellencies to the Almighty; and the holy scriptures are abundant in this. Scripture is rational, but paganism is enthusiastic on this head. With the heathens, all is done by the care and counsel of the Gods.* An affecting tragedy, a moving oration, a flowing poem, are all impossible except to an *enthusiast*, that is, to a man whose genius is animated and filled with the Deity.† The holy scriptures never fail to direct us to the same source. From God's infinite intelligence came all the *riches* and varieties that were assembled in the *fairs* of Tyre, that *covering cherub* whose mercantile influences overspread so many nations. It was he who directed the carpentry, joinery, gilding, carving, and all the embellishments of the temple; yea the spinning of goats hair for the tabernacle. Not only doth *he discover deep things out of darkness*, but his *wisdom finds out the knowledge of* every *witty invention.* Not only *by him do kings reign, and princes decree justice*, but by him *the ploughman ploweth all day*

* . . . . Διος δ' ετελειετο Βουλη. Homer.

† Της δε ΘΕΟΠΝΕΥΣΤΟΥ σοφιης λογος εσιν αριστος.
Βελτερος αλκηεντος εφυ σεσοφισμενος ανηρ.
ΑΓΡΟΥΣ κ᾽ ΠΟΛΙΑΣ σοφιη κ᾽ ΝΗΑ κυβερνα. Phocyl. 122.
Το σφοδρον κ᾽ ΕΝΘΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΩΣ παθος, &c.
Longin. Sub. S. viii. Dion.Halic. de Struct. orat. S. I.

*to sow, openeth and breaketh the clods of his ground; makes plain the face thereof, casts abroad the fitches, scatters the cummin, casts in the principal wheat and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place : for his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.*

Finally : *let not the meanness of your birth and education discourage you.* High birth and genteel education are sometimes indeed the appendages of genius, but every body knows that wisdom is often found under a sorry coat.* Some of the greatest ornaments of our species sprang from the dunghill. Empires have been governed by those that could neither write nor read. Arts and sciences have been invented or improved by the illiberal and base born. The highest are always indebted to the lowest, the miner that works in the earth, and the gardener that tills it, are links in this chain, for *the king himself is served by the field.* And here, one cannot help observing the folly of that distress, which too often harrasses the breasts of parents, whose families are large, and whose circumstances are small. Hath God but one way think you of enriching your family ? *His understanding is infinite. He* sometimes *poureth contempt upon princes,* and *setteth the poor on high from affliction, making him families like a flock.* He can give

* Hic Socrates commemoratur; hic Diogenes ; hic Cæcilianum illud ;*Sæpe est etiam sub palliolo sordido sapientia.* Cic. Tusc. iii. 23.

your poor friendless child a form of body, or a ray of genius, which shall be a portion to him. God can give him a firmness of nerves that shall arm him with a dauntless intrepidity, that intrepidity shall push him to the path were courage riots in the midst of danger; he shall *not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day;* this courage animated by a conscious integrity of heart, shall make him scale a wall, mount a breach, execute a well concerted battle, gain a victory, a victory on which the lives and properties of thousands depended; and who pray would grudge his enjoying the reward? Or God can enrich by a ray of genius. He shall have the art of combining sounds for music; colours for painting; figures for trade; and this art shall be to him worth a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand pounds. Infinite God! how often have we seen *the chief things of the ancient mountains, the precious things of the lasting hills, the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof,* with *the good will of him that dwelt in the bush,* crown the head of a Joseph *separated from his brethren?* In view of this *manifold wisdom,* cease, O cease, christian parent, to weep: *arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand,* for God can *make him a great nation.*

David was too wise a prince not to wish, and too good a man not to pray for these blessings. And his prayers were answered. Solomon his son *spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five: he spake of trees from the*

*cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.* His people too received the blessing, they *cut out windows, cieled with cedar, painted with vermillion,* erected palaces for their princes, and a temple for their God: thus all adorned religion: thus were they as *plants grown up in their youth,* as *stones polished after the similitude of a palace.*

Our text is the prayer of a man who could say, *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes; because they keep not thy law.* We do not hesitate therefore to say that the text includes *the strength and beauty of moral virtue.* Indeed if great mental powers be destitute of morality, if men of science and genius be overbearing, babblers, quarrelsome, and dogmatical, unjust, impure, and insolent, all their speculations will be insults on good sense, at best they will be trifles, of no more importance to us than to know how many inches a grasshopper leaps at a time.* Virtue therefore, a lovely and a lasting virtue, we wish you all to pursue. Distinguish here mere moral from spiritual attainments. Our Saviour saith, *without me ye can do nothing*; but to infer from hence, that without the regenerating influences of the blessed spirit, we are incapable of natural, civil, and moral actions, is not orthodoxy but extravagance. This would

* Θρασυς, ευγλωτος, τολμηρος, ιτης. &c. Aristoph. Nub v. 444.
Ανηρετ' αρτι Χαιρε Φωνται Σωκρατης,
Ψυλλαν οποσης αλλοιτο τους αυτης ποδας. Ibid. 144.

be to erect trophies to God's grace on the ruins of his providence. The God of grace is in perfect harmony with the God of nature, and while we establish christianity, we should be cautious of advancing any thing to subvert it. The question we ask now, is, not whether a man can become a christian without supernatural aid; but whether he can be a good heathen? By what power did the heathens practise so many praise worthy actions? Whence came their modesty, probity, chastity, and fidelity? from the spirit of God, or the dictates of conscience? from the latter no doubt: from that *light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world* St. Paul calls natural religion *the truth of God,* and says, the Gentiles which have not the law, do *by nature* the things contained in the law. What if the bulk of the heathens *changed the truth of God into a lie?* it is the *truth of God* still as far as it goes. Alas! did not the Jews render the law of no effect by their traditions? and have not the bulk of christians vitiated the pure religion of Jesus too? But to return, what the heathens could do who knew not God, that surely you may do; that we solemnly charge you to do, lest Sodom and Gomorrah should rise up in judgment against you.

But what is moral virtue? It is a conformity to that relation which we bear to every being about us, and to that reverence which we owe to ourselves. A little reflection will soon inform a boy that he consists of body and soul; that the well being of the body depends on temperance, chastity,

industry, and so on; that the excellence of his mind is intelligence, and its happiness a certain superiority over those passions that tumultuate and excruciate the bosoms of fools: to each of these speculations he will perceive a practice annexed; these practices are branches of moral virtue. Again: we bear a relation to God, as creatures dependent on a creator from whom we have received all we enjoy, from whom we hope to receive much more; on these accounts as well as for his own inexpressible grandeur and beauty, we owe him the highest admiration, the profoundest reverence, the most unbounded confidence, with constant acknowledgements of prayer and praise. Once more: we bear the relations of children to our parents, of brethren to our brethren, of neighbours to our neighbours, of subjects to our prince, of fellow creatures to all our species: some of these relations are distant, some are near, but all have duties belonging to them, and the discharge of these is moral virtue. This moral excellence, this piety towards God and benevolence to men, this, which the heathens call *virtue*, and which our scriptures, especially the book of Proverbs, term *wisdom*,* is so well dictated by your own consciences, that I need only at present refer you to them.

Pagans indeed carried morality far, but the church of God always exceeded them. What pro-

† Τας τεσσαρας ΑΡΕΤΑΣ, η παρ ημιν ΣΟΦΙΑ.
Clem. Alex. Strom. L. vi.

fane history presents such characters to view as our patriarchs, prophets, princes, and apostles? The former were mere shrubs; the latter *trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord;* the heathens rough unhewn stones; the people of God *corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace.* And no wonder, the church had advantages which heathens were destitute of; these advantages are yours young people, and let nobody frighten you from them, under pretence that works done before conversion are sinful: ever believe that these things are good and profitable to men, and that though *after all* in some sense you will be *unprofitable servants,* mere heathens and not christians; yet if you neglect these things, you will be worse than the filthy heathens *whom the land spued out before you.*

We wish you to excel the whole heathen world; we pray that you may become solid, amiable christians, and would fain by you transmit the precious gospel to posterity. This *everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure,* was *all* David's *desire* for his family, as well as *all his salvation* for himself. He *foresaw the Lord always before his face, rested in his flesh, rejoiced in his heart; was glad with his tongue, because God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne:* to complete our text therefore, we do not doubt but he prayed for *the strength and beauty of true christianity.* Will you prevent me by saying, this is God's work, we grant it. But what do you infer

from that sound maxim ? that you may riot in a tavern, or sleep in a bagnio; if God wants he can call you? abominable inference! detestable reasoning! turning the grace of God into wantonness. Alas, poor souls! Is it thus you understand your bibles! hear the prophet Ezekiel. *A new heart will I give you, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and you shall lothe yourselves for your abominations: not for your sakes saith the Lord God do I this, be it known unto you.* Is this orthodoxy? hear what follows. *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.* What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

You are therefore to pray for the blessed spirit the soul of Christ's mystical body, the church: and that you may the better know what to pray for, attend to these few hints. Christianity begins in self-knowledge, and if God imparts his holy spirit to you, it will fill you with a clear conviction of the blindness of your understandings, the obstinacy of your wills, the irregularity of your passions, in a word, of the depravity and corruption of your hearts: from the fullest evidence you will lament *the crown is fallen from our head: wo unto us that we have sinned,*

The blessed spirit will teach you the nature and use of the law: that it requires perfect obedience; that to suppose the contrary is to make God the author of sin; that it extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart, that the whole world is there-

fore guilty before God; that it convinceth of sin, but that *by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight.*

The hand that thus wounded will proceed to to heal you, by exhibiting the glorious redeemer, (be his name ever venerable to us!) in the dignity of his person, the merit of his obedience and death, the prevalence of his intercession; in a word, in all that glorious assemblage of qualifications which renders him a sinner's *surety.* In view of this, *as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,* so would we lift up the Saviour in the ministry. And as we may suppose a tender parent, in that distressed camp, would carry in his arms a dying, serpent bitten child, and point his eye to the remedy, so have your parents brought you hither this day, hark! *It shall come to pass that whosoever looks shall live.* The Lord help you to believe and be saved!

Faith, repentance, love, and every grace is begun, maintained, and compleated by the same spirit. If you have these pray for their increase. It is the harmony of these that forms the real christian, all are essential to his character, and the want of one proves the absence of all: *without faith it is impossible to please God,* and without love the most unbounded liberality, the deepest penetration, the zeal of a martyr, and the tongue of an angel would be nothing in the sight of God.

The holy spirit also teacheth his disciples to *add to their faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to*

*knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.* He frees from ignorance and intemperance, the vices of the profane; and from impatience, hypocrisy, and bigotry, the vices of the pharisee: and thus he makes *your calling and election sure* to yourselves, and to the church of God; and when you die, ministereth an *entrance abundantly unto you, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Finally, he will lead you to the source of all; the everlasting and distinguishing love of God in Jesus Christ. He will shew you that Jesus, and all his rich salvation is not the procuring cause, but rather the strong expression of the love of God: and on repeated views of this immense treasure, and your participation of it, you will frequently cry, *Thine O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I?*

We have said, pray for these things. Do this, but do more. Diligently hear God's word preached. Search the scriptures. Chuse the company of good people. Study yourselves. Learn your hymns and catechisms. Begin with the simple, thence proceed to the sublime truths of the gospel. Believe, in spite of all the flourishes of falsehood,

that as these simple means spread christianity at first, and reformed it when it was corrupted, so they are the most likely to succeed still. *No man having drank old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith the old is better!*

Put all these things together, assemble them in one youth, and he riseth an angel to view. In an agreeable healthy body, a capacious well cultivated mind; a conduct made up of the *just* and the *lovely;* a soul enriched with every grace that dignifies human nature, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and changing into the same image from glory to glory. What melody in his language while he says, *The Lord is my strength and song, he is become my salvation: he is my God and I will prepare him an habitation: my father's God and I will exalt him.* The venerable elders with his parents bless him: his pastor in the name of each saith, *God before whom my fathers did walk; the God who fed me all my life long; the angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lad, may he grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*

Thus we understand our text. Indulge me with your attention a little longer, while I endeavour to inforce your obedience. May the finger of God write everlasting characters on our hearts!

Pardon me if I tell you that ignorance only makes persuasion necessary; for did you indeed see vice in its own proper undisguised features, did you but see virtue in its own symmetry and beau-

ty, you could not but chuse virtue, and refuse vice. Every object of thought produceth an effect on the mind, as sensible objects produce their effects on the body. I may remove from a fire, but I cannot approach it without feeling certain sensations in my body; at one distance, I am warmed; at a nearer, heated; at a nearer still, scorched; and at another approach I am burnt. It is just the same with the mind. I may turn my eyes from virtue, but I cannot look but I must love. I may avoid reflecting on vice, but if I reflect, I abhor. Fixed and unalterable laws, as independent on me as the motions of the planets, determine these effects. but you turn your eyes from these, or what is worse, you see them through false mediums; through fashion, or custom, through an endless train of prejudices; through the opinions of those that live without reflection, and die without repentance.

Must we then attempt to persuade you? Why what can be said which hath not been said a thousand times? and shall we again *plow upon the rock?* Yet God is rich in mercy, *therefore behold, I will this once cause you to know.*

Consider young people *the authority of God.* It is God who saith to you, *remember your creator in the days of your youth;* he speaks it in his word, he speaks it by his ministers, he speaks it by your own consciences, Were you angels, it would shock one to hear you say, *Who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice?* and will you like little serpents, will you rear your presumptuous

crests, and hiss at him? *will ye also disannul his judgment? will ye condemn him, that ye may be righteous? hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering; the pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof; he divided the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud; who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?* true, *he is slow to anger;* but yet *great in power, he will not at all acquit the wicked.* True, *he is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble;* but yet, *the mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence, yea the world, and all that dwell therein. Out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God hath* already *shined,* but by and by *he shall come, and shall not keep silence, a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heaven from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. O acquaint yourselves now with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto you.*

Reflect on *the nature of what you are invited to.* Every other creature seeks a good, suited to its nature, and having found that good enjoys it: *doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?* but you, while you live in sin, violate every dictate of nature, as well as every command of scripture. You love happiness: we ask you to love God with all your heart, and you tell us, this would destroy all your happiness. *Ah*

*foolish people and unwise!* has religion no charms then? no rewards? what vice is it that appears so desirable, and clothed with so much beauty? What! *eyes full of adultery, a tongue set on fire of hell, a mouth full of cursing and bitterness, a heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked!* What! *brute beasts that corrupt themselves, clouds driven about with the winds, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, the blackness of darkness for ever,* are these the charms that allure you! O blindness and madness! Look at that old debauchee, grown grey in the devil's service; *his bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust. Though* forty years *ago wickedness was sweet in his mouth, yet he sucked the poison of asps, and* now *the gall of asps is within him.* Is that poor, decrepid, guilty thing, sinking under the weight of infirmities and iniquities, is that your model young men? O could you see the tempers of his heart as you do the features of his face, you would see an image of him whom scripture calls *the dragon, that old serpent which is the devil!* formidable creatures! *my soul come thou not into their secret!* But virtue is lovely, infinitely lovely, all description throws a vail over its beauty. Do not judge of virtue and vice metaphysically: assemble on the one hand, the vicious of every age and climate; the Cains, the Pharoahs, the Judasses, the whole world of rebels, with Satan and his infernal legion at their head: place on the other, the just, the generous, the meek, the benevolent people of God,

those whom *the ear blessed when it heard,* whom *the eye gave witness to when it saw, with the brightness of the father's glory* at their head. One of these companies you must imitate, one of these you must join, and associate with for ever. Conscience, I conjure thee in the name of God to do thine office. Ah! *ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him.*

Think a little on *your interest.* Interest is a powerful motive among mankind. For interest they deny themselves a thousand pleasures; for interest they expose themselves to a thousand dangers, and often for a mistaken interest. Religion pleads with you on this head to day. It is the interest of your body, which religion preserves, which iniquity destroys; *for bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.* It is the interest of your soul, which without religion is irretrievably lost; for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* It is the interest of your family; for *the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked! but he blesseth the habitation of the just.* It is the interest of your circumstances; for *there is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty.* It is the interest of your diversions; for *the wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, a dreadful sound is in his ears.* It is the interest of your character: indeed in a world made up of righteous and wicked, it is impossible to gain the applauses of both; yet somehow or other, even

a wicked man's conscience will approve what he hath not courage to imitate; *he that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.* In youth, in manhood, in old age; abroad, at home, at meeting, at market; alone, in company; in prosperity and in adversity; in the gaieties of life, and in the agonies of death; religion is your best and truest interest.

Meditate a moment on *the necessity of gratitude.* Favors confer obligations which all but devils love to discharge. Ingratitude is a vice so black that the world disowns and detests it. But if you persist in sin, are you not guilty of the most hateful ingratitude? You are a rational creature capable of enjoying God: you are of that species of rationals which *God went to redeem,* when he passed by angels: you were born in Christendom, not in the wilds of America: not in the bosom of popery, where the beauty of christianity is hid under disgustful superstitions, but in a reformed church: your magistrates have protected you: your ministers instructed you: your parents taught you: thousands of friendly hands have assisted you: all these become supplicants to you, all these cry, *only acknowledge thine iniquity.* Will you, like *a wild ass, snuff up the wind at your pleasure, and* practically *say there is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go!* Monster of ingratitude, *is this thy kindness to thy friends?*

Look at *the state of the church.* A christian society is the noblest association in the world, the

world, like the house of Obed-edom, is blest for the ark's sake; your ancestors were sensible of this when they hazarded their lives and properties to plant religious assemblies; and are you more concerned to support an ale-house club, than to uphold this society? a society assembled by the express direction of the only wise God, purchased by the invaluable price of Christ's blood, separated and sanctified by the holy spirit. Shall the lives of the apostles, the labours of the fathers, the blood of so many martyrs, the tears of your parents, the prayers of your ministers; shall all these go to support, and will you desert it? Distressing thought! especially to thy father! O how he wishes for Davids blessing, *a son grown up like a plant in his youth*, to whom when he dies he might say, *I go the way of all the earth, but thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do.* Cruel son! wilt thou imbitter death to that good old man by robbing him of this his only hope? wilt thou *bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave?* Were you rewarded according to your works, *men would clap their hands at you, and hiss you out of your place.*

Consider finally therefore *the issue of all:* for rewarded according to your works you will undoubtedly be. Pleasing as the present scene is, to the impenitent it is but as the fine dawn of that day in which Sodom was destroyed. Presently perhaps the *Lord will rain upon the wicked snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, for him that loveth violence his soul always hateth.*

What if the Lord delayeth his coming? Carry your thoughts forward to the longest period of life, at last comes death, you must die, willing or unwilling stupid or afraid, a loiterer in God's vineyard, or a labourer in the devil's the day will finish, and you must die: but how? *Terrors shall take hold on you as waters; a tempest shall steal you away in the night, an east-wind as a storm shall hurl you out of your place.* Dreadful as death is, after it comes judgment. How will you look the judge in the face? There, in the presence of *thousand thousands* that minister to him, of *ten thousand times ten thousand that stand before him;* there, when *the sea gives up the dead which were in it, and death and hell deliver up the dead which were in them;* there, when *small and great stand before God;* there, to *the ancient of days,* whose purity is inconceivable, whose vengeance is is insufferable, to him who *strikes through kings in the day of his wrath,* who confoundeth the proudest sinner, and accepteth the meanest service; to him will we solemnly deliver you up, and say, *This our son was stubborn and rebellious, he would not obey our voice, he was a glutton and a drunkard.* Then what would you give if all Israel might stone you with stones, that you might die? No, death would be mercy: the judge shall say *depart into everlasting fire.* Fearful solemnity of inflexible justice! when *hell from beneath shall move to meet thee at thy coming;* when *he who blessed himself in his heart while he heard the words of the curse, saying, I shall have peace*

*though I add drunkeness to thirst, shall lie under all the curses of this book;* when *the anger of Jehovah and his jealousy shall smoke against him, and shall blot out his name from under heaven.* When *all that fear God shall say Hallelujah,* while your *smoke riseth up for ever and ever.* When these friendly tears of a compassionate stranger shall be dried up; these? Alas! even your parents, free from the weakness of the passions, and full of the equity of the punishment, your parents shall weep no more, but shout *Rejoice over her thou heaven,* . . . .

Let us finish. Do you say, *pray to the Lord for us, that none of these things which you have spoken may come upon us?* We will do so chearfully, *being affectionately desirous of you,* we are *willing to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you are dear unto us;* but in vain we do all this, except you *repent and pray* for yourselves. Some of you have religious parents, whose lives are bound up in yours, who wait to assist and encourage you. Go generous youths, *refresh their bowels in the Lord.* Obey the dictates of nature and of scripture. While their repeated instructions *drop like the rain,* and *distil as the dew,* may you *grow like the cedars in Lebanon.* When he that planted and they that watered are dead, may you flourish in the next generation, transmitting to your children, and to your children's children the precious gospel which we commit to you: and when you have out grown this nursery, may you be transplanted into the para-

dise of God, trees of life, flourishing in unfading verdure for a thousand generations.

Others of you perhaps are *sons of strangers,* whose parents (I blush to speak it in your presence: Unnatural parents! what punishments? ..... *But I spare you)* whose parents, careless about their own souls, have abandoned yours. Poor orphans! how much are you to be pitied? therefore pitiable because rational. Had ye been mere animals, lion's whelps, *the old lioness* would have *learned you to have catched prey and to have devoured men:* yea *even the sea monsters would have drawn out their breast to their young.* But your *fathers have sinned, and you have borne their iniquities.* They have neglected, however, they have not deprived you of reason. Come therefore, be not cast down with overmuch sorrow. Know that it is the glory of the gospel to be accessible to the poor and illiterate, and one page of your catechism will teach you more of God and godliness, than all the wisest of the heathens ever knew. * *Let not the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, the Lord hath utterly seperated me from his people, behold I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto them that keep my sabbaths, and chuse the*

* Quid enim THALES ille princeps physicorum sciscitanti Cræso de divinitate certum renunciavit, commeatus deliberandi sæpe frustratus? Deum QUILIBET OPIFEX CARISTIANUS et invenit, et ostendit, ..... licet PLATO affirmet factitatorem universitatis, neque inveniri facilem, et inventum enarrari in omnes difficilem. Tertulliani Apol. Cap. xlvi.

*things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer: for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.* Come then, turn this promise into prayer, say *O Lord, our fathers have inherited vanity and lies, but in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.* The church is a Bethesda, a house of mercy, some Paul will plant, some Apollos water, and God will give the increase.

Parents, children, hearers, members of this society, officers of the church, rich, poor, whoever or whatever you are, members of our community, or of any other, I charge you all, as you will answer it at the great and terrible day of the Lord, respect the word of God which you have now heard. You have not been listening to the little peculiarities of a party, but to truths which all our communities profess to believe. Forget every thing but the *common salvation,* join with the Psalmist in the text. *Rid and deliver us from strange children, that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, our daughters as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace. Happy is the people that is in such a case! Yea happy is that people whose God is the Lord!* To him be honor and glory for ever. Amen.

FINIS.

## *ADVERTISEMENT,*

TO THE FOLLOWING SERMON.

*INDEVOTION and irreverence in places of public worship have always been complained of in university towns; and though Cambridge is on many accounts the most unexceptionable of all seminaries of learning, yet even this famous academy has been culpable, and is not at present entirely free from blame.*

*Most graduates in the university either confine themselves to their own college chapels, or behave with propriety when they attend the public places of devotion in the town: but some undergraduates, who go to the university as void of manners as of religious principle, unacquainted with the laws of the land, and the statutes of the university, inattentive to the examples of their superiors, the propriety of their own characters, and the miserable influence, that their irreverence has on the common people, elude the vigilance of their tutors, and wander into places of worship, as their own term is, merely for a lounge. The dissenters come in for a share of their visits, and though custom soon produces in their ministers a a useful insensibility to such visitants, yet the people, and particularly the fair sex, are frequently interrupted in their devotion.*

*Many attempts have been made to reform this abuse: there is an old university statute, which*

*forbids* hemming, hawking *and* spitting, *during the time of divine service; there is a statute of Charles II. prohibiting the* reading of sermons, *and* the use of notes, *and requiring preachers to speak* extempore, *for the greater solemnity of public worship; and there was a popular preacher, who a few years ago sharply reproved the practice of scraping with the feet in the gallery of the university church, (which was done when the sermon was disliked) in a discourse from Eccl. v.* 1. *Sometimes the Procters attend, and punish delinquents; and successive Vicechancellors, and Heads of houses, have always expressed their abhorrence of irreverence, and discovered the utmost readiness to suppress it.*

*The present dissenting ministers in Cambridge, it seems, have never met with any personal affront; but on the contrary have been always treated with the utmost civility by the university, however, it happens in their congregations, as it does in the churches, the unthinking vivacity af youth sometimes disturbs the people, and particularly at evening lectures. Such an interruption, continued for three or four evenings, gave occasion to the following discourse.*

# SERMON II.

On a BECOMING BEHAVIOUR in RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLIES.

Preached at *Cambridge*, Jan. 10, 1773.

1 TIM. iii. 14, 15.

*These things I write unto thee····that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar, and ground of the truth.*

DO not imagine, my brethren, that I am going to affront your good sense by attempting to give you rules of behaviour at meeting. If your parents have omitted this necessary part of your education; if your masters and tutors have given you no tuition on this head; if you have had no opportunity of forming your deportment by a genteel acquaintance in the world; if you be strangers to that *benevolence*, which never *behaves itself unseemly;* if you have enjoyed none of these advantages, you are, however, in possession of one, of which common sense will avail itself; that is, the constant attendance of several members of this university, whose presence, in your religious assemblies, is a proof of their candour, and a pattern for your behaviour.

Sons of the first families in the kingdom, they are polite from the womb. Designed for the first offices in the church, they are virtuous by profession. Enriched with a variety of knowledge, particularly with that which relates to the government of mankind, they know the value of religious worship to the happiness of an individual, to the order of a family, to the government of a state, to the glory of God, and to the universal happiness of mankind. In them you have an example how you *ought to behave yourselves in the church of God;* and should there be one of this number, who should ignorantly or designedly behave ill at public worship, his rudeness, so contrary to the public expectation, and to his own profession, could not fail of operating as an antidote on you. Let us then for the present waive this part of the subject, and, should it appear necessary, let us return to it by and by.

This epistle was written by the great St. Paul, in favour of a young minister, whose family he knew, whose abilities he admired; for whose usefulness he most ardently prayed, for whom, in a word, he entertained the most cordial respect. The good apostle, like a kind father, contemplates every thing, that could profit his *son Timothy*, (as he calls him,) and condescends to direct his most minute affairs. Seemingly of a delicate constitution, subject to *frequent infirmities*, he is advised to a singular regimen; *a little wine*, and a deal of episcopal labour. In

public he was to *preach the word*, and to *be instant in season and out of season*. In private he was to *give attendance to reading*, to *meditate on the several* branches of theology, to *give himself wholly to them*. He was to *consider* first *what St. Paul said;* that is to say, revealed truth, and then, the apostle prays, *the Lord give thee understanding in all things;* as if he had said, may you be, if there can be such a person, an universal scholar; for all knowledge may subserve the gospel of Christ. But, as if all the finest natural and acquired abilities, as if all the accomplishments of nature and grace, as if all the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were nothing, unless they tended to the good of society, the apostle adds, *I write these things that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

Does not St. Paul here prove himself a perfect judge of mankind? He knew, that miraculous gifts void of popular evidence, could answer no valuable end to the bulk of mankind; he knew that they who could not follow a train of reasoning, could, however, judge of a man's deportment; and, from his imitation of the Deity, would infer that his mission was divine; he knew, that a *mere scholar* was an useless animal, whom the populace would condemn to moulder away in a college apartment, the world a speculation to him, and he a spectacle to the world; he knew, that the happiness of society did not depend on an ar-

rangement of words, but on a mutual interchange of kind offices: he knew the power of example, and, therefore exhorted Timothy to *be an example of the believers in word, in behaviour, in charity in spirit, in truth, in purity.* Happy the people whose pastors thus impress the gospel on their hearts!

The importance of the *behaviour* recommended in the text, will be a sufficient reason for avoiding all the litigations, for which this and the following verse have given occasion. To this behaviour let us wholly attend; and, without pretending to prescribe rules for it, let us only remark, that every idea in the text justifies and enforces a decent deportment in places of religious worship; and each may serve also to confound a contrary conduct.

Behave well in the house of God, because it is *a church.*

Behave well, because it is the church *of the living God.*

Behave well, because it is *the pillar and ground*, that is, *the seat, or residence of truth.*

Behave well because you are in *a church.* The word *church*, you know, is sometimes used indeterminately for any assembly, even for a riotous one. Thus in Acts xix. 32. The *church*, or *the assembly was confused.* Sometimes it is put for an assembly met for the worship of God, as in Philemon 2d. *Paul to the church in thy house:* and sometimes, in a more confined sense still, for that

part of the worshippers only, which *worship God in spirit and truth.* Now take the word in which sense you will, and you will allow, that a decent behaviour in such an assembly always becomes the man, and the christian, and above all the minister of Jesus Christ.

Suppose in the first place, a *confused assembly* of ignorant people met for as absurd a purpose as the worship of Diana. This assembly is either allowed, or disallowed, by the state. If disallowed the cognizance of such an affair belongs only to the magistrates, the guardians of public peace and order. If allowed, the disturbing of such an assembly is an insult on government. But, exclusively of both these considerations, what would a man of sense and religion do in such an assembly? *Touched with a feeling of* his brethren's infirmities, he would sigh for the depravity of human nature; he would pity and pray for the deluded people; he would exhort *by the meekness and gentleness of Christ;* but he would never think of insulting them. To exasperate is not the way to convert. The Epicureans and Stoics, indeed, nick-named St. Paul, They called that master of address a *babbler:* but did that great man imitate so mean a conduct? On the contrary, though noting could be more absurd than the Athenian superstition, though St. Paul was justly offended with it, yet he began his discourse with a title, of which they were not a little proud,—*Ye men of Athens:* and all his address to them is a pattern of good manners as well as of true religion. Peo-

ple may be extremely ignorant of religion, and yet respectable members of society. Their birth, their rank, their human literature, their fortune, their offices, all these, with a thousand other things, claim respect, although none may be due to them on a religious account. Behave well then in *every assembly*.

Suppose again *an assembly met for the worship of God*. Is it not the height of brutality to behave ill to such people? There is a God,—that God is to be worshipped, are two truths, which all, but here and there an abandoned libertine, confess. The seat of true religion is the heart, and to love God is that religion. The various modes and forms of worship are only different expressions of that love. If men express their veneration for the Deity in such a way, as appears to them most agreeable to him, God, no doubt, accepts such worshippers; and will you *curse whom God hath blessed?* To mistake or not to mistake, in the mode, is nothing to the purpose; the form chosen by the assembly in question, ought to be supposed to be matter of conscience to them; and church and state unite in protecting honest, though mistaking consciences. They are right, heaven protects them, and proclaims, *In the integrity of your hearts ye have done it.*

An assembly convened to pay that just homage to God, which reason and revelation claim, is the most venerable sight in the world; as far superior to a circle of literati met to investigate a science; as far superior to an army assembled to protect

civil rights; as far superior to a senate convened to conduct a nation; as the honour of God is above the interests of men. If it be criminal to disconcert the last, what will you call the madness that disturbs the first?

Worshippers of the God of the whole earth, peace be with you! *Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. Who laid the foundations of the earth, or who stretched the line upon it? Who shut up the sea with doors, and said, hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther? Who caused the day-spring to know his place? Who provided for the raven his food? Who hath given understanding to the heart? Who increaseth the nations and destroyeth them again? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?* Incomparable Majesty! these are *parts of thy ways!* but what art thou? *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thyself!* thine infinite excellency hid thee from the keenest penetration of reason for ages: but thy son hath revealed thee in the church, revealed thee to the faith of the meanest worshipper; and *in thy temple doth every man* now *speak of thy glory.* Immortal God! may thy peace be with all, who assemble to study thy nature, to admire thy government, to celebrate the praise of thy grace. Let neither ignorance nor impudence disturb thy worship.

When Balaam from the top of a mountain surveyed the Jewish church; when he saw the order of the camp, and the employments of the people; when he saw their altars smoaking, and their priests worshipping, base as he was, he was struck with the sight, and

could not help exclaiming, *How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!* In this the sordid prophet is worthy of imitation. Thus let us survey a christian assembly. Here stands an orphan, who, by the loss of his parents, is deprived of every earthly resource; he has heard, that in God *the fatherless findeth mercy;* to solicit this mercy is his errand here. There sits a distressed widow, whose guardian-angel is fled; whose handful of meal the creditor is come to seize; her lovely hungry babes around her excite fresh grief; even now, insensible of their loss, they ask her to save the corner of the pew for their father. Alas! let her alone, her soul is troubled in her; she is meditating on that saying, *a father of the fatherless, a judge of the widow is God in his holy habitation.* She is now going to *cast her care* upon God. Yonder comes with slow and weary steps, a publican. Poor man! his whole life till lately was spent *without God in the world;* a fever took him, he had time to meditate, and he found himself *without Christ and without hope.* Alarmed at his dangerous state, he is coming to *the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help him in time of need.* All along he meditates his own misery and God's mercy, and all along determines to stand in the aisle and say, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* One loaded with mercies comes to praise; another pressed with infirmities comes to pray. Perhaps the abundance of your troubles may divert the attention of some of you from the less important decorum of exterior exactness; perhaps it

may even betray you into some aukward gestures; but this indecorum does not signify; every man of sense will consider the integrity of your hearts, and overlook your external expression. The best bred nobleman for the same reason would accept the honest but aukward gratitude of a poor tenant. *God* himself *looketh not on the outward appearance; but on the heart.* Yes! you have well done to come and *commit your way* unto God! *Come in, ye blessed of the Lord.* Come, *pour out your hearts before him,* he is *God at hand; this is his memorial for all generations.* Should a Balaam behold, even a Balaam would exclaim, *He resteth as an old Lion, who shall stir him up? blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee!*

Suppose yet farther, *an assembly of people whose names are written in heaven, a church of the first born,* worshipping God *in spirit and in truth.* Glorious assembly! *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* Every voice ought to cry, *Grace be to you and peace be multiplied! You are the salt of the earth, the light of the world,* the Lots, who weep for the abominations of our Sodom; for our *pride, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness.* You are the Noahs, the Daniels, the Jobs, for whose sakes our *sons and daughters are delivered. Servants of the most high God! who shew unto us the way of salvation, he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of*

God's *eye.* If you be dispersed among all sects and parties, for your sakes shall all sects and parties *enjoy their sabbaths.* I remember who hath said, *It were better for you that a millstone were hanged about your neck, and you cast into the sea, than that you offend one of these.* Yes! my Redeemer! I remember this, and I remember also the ingratitude of those, who one hour said, *Sing us one of the songs of Sion,* and the next cried, *Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.* Christians! be deaf to the senseless noise of persecutors, and listen rather to that voice, which cries, *the Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.* Assemble *where* you will, in the consecrated cathedral, or in the country barn, *were two or three of you are, there is* Christ *in the midst of you.* Assemble *when* you will, *in season,* or *out of season,* early in the morning, as the people to hear Jesus in the temple; or late at night, as the multitude to hear Paul at Troas; " *it is* (as the established service hath it,) *very meet, right, and your bounden duty, at all times, and in all places, to give thanks to your holy father, the almighty and everlasting God.*"

Strictly speaking, the respect, that men owe each other, is more founded on their nature than on any other consideration. He, therefore, who would not disturb an assembly of noblemen in divine worship, ought not to disturb an assembly of poor men. Yea, the religious rights of the last are, in some sense, more sacred than those of the first. The comforts, which they enjoy in reli-

gious exercises, are all the consolations, that some people have. Hunger, nakedness, poverty, *straitness in all their gates,* are all they have elsewhere. Here, in the house of God only, do they sing and *forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more.* Do you, who roll in plenty, who have *more than heart can wish,* do you grudge your poor brethren this, their only pleasure? Cruel as Egyptian task-masters, do you not only oppress them in an iron furnace at home, but do you refuse to grant them the modest request of going into the wilderness to meet their God? O insufferable tyrants! when they set out, do you, like Pharoah, say, *We will pursue, and overtake?* Why, this is like taking away *the poor man's little ewe lamb, which drank of his cup, and lay in his bosom,* and which appeared so criminal to David, that he declared, *the man, that hath done this, shall surely die.*

The two ceremonies of washing and changing their garments, when they approached divine worship, are said to be found in all ancient religions; in the various modes of pagan worship, as well as in the Jewish ritual. Indeed, a little common sense, without revelation, is enough to convince people, that the spirit of the world has nothing to do in publick worship. We may therefore believe with St. Paul, even independent on his authority, that *behave well in a public assembly* is one of the first and plainest commands, neither hard to discover, nor irrational to obey.

Let us pass to the second article. The assem-

bly in question is *the church of the living God.* A stronger reason still for good behaviour. A congregation assembling to worship God in Christ doth neither assemble against his known and express will, as all assemblies for immoral purposes do; nor are they assembled merely for convenience, as people in places of traffic are; nor are they assembled on principles of self-interest, as civil states are; least of all can it be supposed, that a blind chance collects them together; but they assemble by the express command and direction of the eternal and *only wise God.* When the prophets foretell the establishment of divine worship in the heathen world, they say, the Lord shall *call a nation;* God shall *persuade* Japhat to dwell in the tents of Shem. The apostles, therefore, name the primitive churches *the called* in Christ Jesus. Very properly then did St. Paul say to the Thesalonians, *God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness;* and very justly did he infer, *He therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God.*

Not only does the church assemble by divine authority, but also every part of their worship is prescribed by the living God. Do they sing? they have the example of Christ, and his command by the apostles for their practice. Do they pray? they are directed to make *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; for this,* they are told, *is good and acceptable in the sight of God their Saviour.* Is the word of God preached? their ministers are com-

manded to preach, and they are ordered to *take heed how they hear;* to which an apostle adds, *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.* All these exercises proceed from the regal authority of the son of God. They are the laws of his kingdom, and these are his officers and subjects executing them. Are the ambassadors of an earthly prince sacred? Are the meanest officers of a state venerable for their office-sake? And shall not the church of the living God be unmolested, while building a tabernacle according to *the pattern* given *on the mount?* When Jacob foresaw the scepter in the hand of this descendant of Judah; when he he foresaw the *equity* of his government, and the *authority*, which supported it, he abhorred a disturber, and cried, *Judah is a lion's whelp, he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall rouse him up?* Is there not iniquity enough in abstaining from these exercises yourselves? Will you go yet farther, and affront the Lord by disturbing those, who do worship him? Answer this plaintive question, *Why persecutest thou me?*

There is a nobler sense yet, in which the church is *the church of the living God.* A christian church is not only a part of his empire, but it is his palace also. It is *the house of God,* the family in which he dwells. We know in general so little of the nature of spirits, and, in particular, so little of the supreme spirit, that we must be content to enjoy without attempting to explain this excellent promise, *I will dwell in you, and*

*walk in you; I will be your God, and you shall be my people.* When a soul *meditates* on God, it *sees his power and glory in the sanctuary;* it *tastes a loving kindness better than life;* it is *satisfied as with marrow and fatness;* it exclaims, *his strength* indeed *is in the clouds,* but *his excellency is over Israel.* Full of a sense of his favour; afraid of arousing his displeasure; such aperson prays, *scatter them, that delight in war; rebuke the multitude of* fierce *bulls,* whose cruelty, *with the calves of the people,* whose folly, would deprive the church of such a blessing as the presence of God.

In God's immediate presence, while his servants are doing his will on earth as it is done in heaven; while they act under his authority, and endeavour to display his glory; who but would say, *I* also *will sing of mercy and judgment; I* also *will behave myself wisely in a perfect way; I hate the work of them that turn aside; I will not know a wicked person?*

Finally:—Behave well in the house of God, because it is *the seat of truth.* This can neither be said of the world; of the schools of philosophers; of the temples of idols; nor of the Mosaic œconomy. Shadows in the temple of Solomon; blasphemy in the temples of idols; vanity in the schools of science; treachery in the world; *to whom,* then, *Lord shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

Truth is in the church as the church is opposed to the *world.* All, that the world proposes, is summed up in three words; honour, pleasure,

profit. What falsehood often in the objects! oftener still, what falsehood in the means of obtaining them! The church only is the seat of rational pleasure, real honour, eternal gain. They invent in the world high sounding titles, *great swelling words of vanity;* they deck themselves with these and call the fantastic assemblage honour. They eat, they drink, they buy with subtilty, they sell with treachery, they marry, they give in marriage, they vainly boast of themselves, they cruelly slander others, and they call it pleasure. They lose immortal happiness to procure a present sum, and they agree to call it gain. And so sanguine are they in these pursuits, that they call those, ill-bred clowns, who, to stop their career, venture in pity to disturd their reveries. Shall people of this class, *deceiving and being deceived,* shall they be indulged with decency and good behaviour, and shall not they, who pursue in the church of the living God nobler objects, shall not they participate the same blessings? Communion with God, which is attended with profit, pleasure, and honour, is the noblest pursuit. God forbid any should interrupt so laudable an ambition! Should a christian stumble into a playhouse, or wander to a race-ground, should he riotously interrupt the companies, every tongue would exclaim, is this your religion! Yet what would be shocking at a play is good-breeding at church!

Truth is in the church opposed to *the schools of philosophers.* Were it the truth of an art, as of architecture, painting, or statuary; were it the

truth of a science, as of astronomy; you might go to the shops of mechanics, or to the public schools; and, should you find a man excelling in his profession, reason would require, that respect should be shewn him. But the truth in question is *the truth of God.* What the philosophers had of this in the light of nature, *they changed into a lie,* and by revelation they never had it. Was Socrates to be respected at Athens for teaching a little natural religion? how much more respect is due to the servants of Christ, teaching in the church the truths of revelation! The church is the seat of religious truth; and although many fine things may be said of Athens and Rome, yet *in Judah only is God known;* in Judah therefore, *the arrows, the bow, the shield, the sword and the battle* should be broken, and *none of the men of might should find their hands.* How painful is the remembrance of the respect shewn to other truth, while religious truth is despised? Glory over us, ye professors of every science! Ye also, who teach the most trifling art! your lot seems preferable to the fate of those, who preach *Christ the wisdom, and the power of God.* In quiet you teach your disciples to fence, to dance, to draw; O that we also might be suffered *in quiet to possess our souls!*

Again, the church is the seat of truth opposed to the falsehood in *idol-temples.* The church speaks of mysteries; but they of impossibilities. *God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* Great myste-

ries without controversy! but mysteries however of godliness! and herein they differ from the mysteries of an atheist, who has no religion; and from the mysteries of a deist, who has a false one. These with all the pagan errors of old, are mysteries of iniquity; systems invented to serve sin. When St. Paul went to Thessalonica, some infidels *took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar, crying, these, that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.* These say, *there is one king Jesus.* But what said the apostle? *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you.* If he thought proper to behave unexceptionably to such a generation of liars; with how much reason might he say to Timothy, behave well *in the church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth!*

Finally, the church is the seat of truth in distinction from the *Mosaic œconomy*, which was a general draught, *a shadow of good things to come.* The truth of prophecy, the truth of all the types and shadows is in the new testament church. Christ is the priest whom Melchisedec prefigured, the king whom that venerable personage represented; he is *the end of the law*, the substance of all its shadows; and you know how St. Paul treats this subject: *if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. He, that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three*

*witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God, and done despite unto the spirit of grace?* Thus, you see, every idea in the text confirms the exhortation; all say, *behave well in the house of God.*

These are the just sentiments, not of the meeting-house only, but of all denominations of christians; and should any one of our people violate these sacred rights of society, we would assemble the body, execrate his conduct, and expel him from our community.

Let us conclude by remarking the evils that are produced by ill behaviour in the church of God. Who knows but *a plain unvarnished tale* may place this article in a proper light? Forgive me, if it should be long; perhaps I may have a right for once to try the patience of those, who often exercise mine.

When I was first called to the pastoral office by this congregation, about fourteen years ago, I had an opportunity of inspecting the papers belonging to the society, among which was the covenant or agreement signed by all the members, before they were admitted to the Lord's supper, as the rule of their actions. I was the more curious to examine this, as it described the manners of the old dissenters in Cambridge from their first toleration, and had been their rule of life for more than half a century. To my great surprise I found one article forbade their entering, on any account whatever,

into the established places of worship. Another prohibited their accompanying with people of that community. A third strictly enjoined them not to intermarry with any of the members of that church. The penalty for a breach of these articles was excommunication. I was surprised, that a people, who were neither required to abjure in form, atheism, deism, judaism, nor popery, should yet be required formally to abjure the established church. The church of England only was the object of their inveteracy. My astonishment encreased on finding that such a covenant was drawn up by the famous Joseph Hussey, one of their former pastors. He was a man of great learning and piety, a very popular preacher, and deservedly respected by all the dissenters in the county. Indeed, his ideas of learning and piety were so refined, that he was very susceptible of an affront from people professing either to be knowing or good. For my part, having been educated in the established church, having conscientiously dissented from it, and having suffered on account of my dissent, I had been naturally led to examine, and to abhor intolerant principles, and my notions of church discipline were very remote from these articles: however, great respect was due to Mr. Hussey's judgment, and, I thought, it might edify me to enquire the cause of so extraordinary a conduct to the established church. An opportunity soon offered. The congregation invited me again to take the pastoral office. I thanked them for their generous confidence in a person so young, but begged

leave to refuse the pastorship. They urged me to give a reason for my refusal; which I did, by assuring them, that I could not in conscience agree to their discipline, which I thought by far too rigorous. None of the old men attempted to plead for the old discipline; they all agreed, however, in declaring that it was highly proper, when it was first established; and assigned the ill behaviour of the gownsmen at meeting as a reason. Jews and Papists never entered their assemblies; they had a good opinion of them; but the gown came frequently, and always disturbed their worship; they thought them therefore the profanest of mankind, and *that* the most antichristian church, which nourished such members and ministers in her bosom. I'll tell you, gentlemen, how the gownsmen of that age behaved in the church of God.

When a young gentleman came first to college, finding no amusement in books, manuscripts, experiments, or any of the riches of literature, he must be amused with the oddities of Cambridge, among which old Hussey, the presbyterian parson, (as the cant of that day was,) was always numbered. Away a posse went to meeting, and in defiance of statutes and proctors, they would publish all along the streets, that they were going to have a little fun with the preacher. Arrived at the house, they would bang the doors, stalk up the ailes, fling themselves on the sides of the pews: just come from country schools, many of them from charity schools, they thought, to give themselves

airs were the marks of good-breeding. One, with a *lack-lustre eye*, with a vacant countenance, and a harmless heart, would toss, and twirl, and play with his cap; and when tired with that amusement would walk off. A second with *a brazen brow and an iron sinew*, if the minister mentioned a word, which was not in his school dictionary, would swear, he never had heard such a word in his life. A third, who thought he must act some part, would laugh, and, for want of discernment to know when, would often laugh when he ought to have blushed. A fourth, with *eyes full of adultery* (I use St. Peter's language,) would stand on tiptoe, stare at all the ladies in the meeting, and sometimes, O lost to all decency! would peep under the women's hats. Do you wonder, my brethren! that there have been instances of the good womens' losing all christian patience, and, before the whole assembly, slapping their faces? Ought that young gentleman to complain, who one day mistaking an old for a young woman, was knocked down by the old lady for his impertinence? These were the glorious criteria of academic politeness at that time of day. Whether the modern practice of hunting for the preacher, as astronomers hunt for Jupiter's moons, with magnifying glasses, were then in use, I cannot tell. If it were, I should think, nothing could justify it; for if students eyes be worn down with hard night-reading, and writing, they should remember, that they come to divine worship rather to hear than to see, beside, if *spectatum veniunt** be allowed, *spectentur ut ip-*

* They come to see

*si* * ought not to be refused, and would not that have been, think ye, a very edifying sight? Some hundreds of people worshipping God by spying one another's features through glasses, the preacher in his turn spying them all! But to return.

When I had heard all this, I own, I was struck: but having, I know not what; partiality for the gown, I tried to excuse what I could not in my conscience approve. I urged their *youth*. That, said the good old men, is no excuse; on the contrary, it aggravates their crime. The virtue of youth is modesty, and when a young man has lost his modesty, possess what he will, he is an object of horror. I pleaded their *birth*: but that would not do. For, said my opponents, if they be gentlemen's sons, they sin against their own knowledge; and if they be poor lads, they sin against humility. Does it become poor lads, said they, to disguise themselves in a gown, and insult us *who would have disdained to have set their fathers with the dogs of our flocks?* Such as they, said one,

> Forget the dunghills where they grew,
> And think themselves the Lord knows who!

I said, they were *members of a famous university*. They replied, that therefore they should be concerned for the honour of that reverend body; that this was the way to disgrace the whole university; that the worst part of the worst man's cha-

* They come to be seen.

racter was, *he ate of my bread, and he lift up his heel against me.* I added, that as Mr. Hussey preached often, preached to a plain people, and for their sakes preferred a popular familiar dialect before a scholastic accuracy, or before an elegant delicacy of style, perhaps he not only thought with Quintilian that perspicuity was the first, but the only virtue of a public speech, and, intent on answering the great end of his ministry, the salvation of his people's souls, he might sometimes offend against the laws of speech. They answered, it was not likely that a man of learning should do so; that if he did, it would be easy, though not generous, to say to an undergraduate censor, *physician, heal thyself;* that every man of sense would attend to a public speaker's design more than to his address in delivering himself. At length, I had exhausted my pleas, and, as I could not excuse, I was forced to content myself with pitying and blushing for young men, whom, with all their faults, I sincerely loved.

Nothing of this, however was urged for the continuance of the old rigid discipline, and I took the pastoral office only on condition of their abrogating laws, the manifest tendency of which was the maintenance of party prejudices, the murder of christian love.

You will perhaps ask me, what effects followed? I will tell you. The *living God*, the guardian of his own gospel, always ready to succour the well meant though weak efforts of all who endeavour to extend his empire of love, this God

mercifully overruled providences to answer our wishes, and caused the relief to proceed from the very men, whose order had caused the scandal. Aware of the prejudices of the good people of the congregation, I endeavoured to conceal my acquaintance with some pious gownsmen then in college; however, it came out, and, as I feared, offended several worthy people, who even suspected my orthodoxy, and questioned me about it. I made the best apology, that I could, for my intimacy with these good men. I said nothing of their families; for my dissenting brethren had no idea of a gentleman without virtue. I said nothing of their learning: for they did not care for all their latin and greek unless subservient to piety. I endeavoured to prove them GOOD MEN. How! said they, *can any good come out of Nazareth?* Should any say so now, I would answer, *come and see.* In short these gentlemen, with their modest deportment at meeting, with their friendly and edifying visits among the people, with abstaining from all that could give offence to any, with practising the virtues that approve men the servants of God, effectually destroyed party zeal; and now, blessed be God, churchmen are seen frequently at meeting, dissenters occasionally at church, and people begin to act as if they thought the religion of christians a religion of love. In those days of yore, how often have dissenting ministers in Cambridge bewailed this thorn in their nest: how often have they envied their brethren, whose lots were cast in the least civilized parts of his Majesty's do-

minions! Happy you, said they, who in sea port towns preach to a rough ship's crew! happy you who preach to *plowmen and vine dressers!* you enjoy the toleration allowed to protestant dissenters in the fullest sense. You ask, *where is* THE PLACE OF WISDOM? *The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: for the price of wisdom is above rubies!* For our parts, we answer, *the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* How often did these good men, when preaching in country towns, remember the saying of a certain nobleman, who, when he saw the kind actions of the beasts in the Tower to each other, exclaimed, we have been mistaking, these are the rationals, and we are the brutes!

To come into our places of worship now, after such scenes as these, is like coming home after a long rough voyage. Indeed some imperfections attend us still. Still there is, as there always will be, an Ishmael in Abraham's family. Notwithstanding all the just and generous efforts of the heads of houses; notwithstanding the frequent attendance of proctors; notwithstanding the example of hundreds of well behaved gownsmen; there will be now and then an aukward, an ignorant, or an intoxicated lad, whose vanity and brutality will be insensible to all. Such a person appears among you, gentlemen! as satan presented himself among the sons of God: but, as a proof of the extreme folly of such a lad, to what a disadvantage does he appear in your company in the house of God? Contrasted with you, who behave well, he produces

the same effect on spectators, as an ill-drawn daubing hung by the side of a finely finished picture would produce; the beauty of the one aggravates the horror of the other. With the greatest disgust all behold, the more delicate sex especially, behold the frightful creature, and every tongue proclaims his enormous praise. All think him too bad for reason, and punish him with the severest ridicule; and, should that question, sometimes put up in the schools, be ever put up in a circle of ladies, *detur vacuum ?** they would be provoked to answer *Detur.*† It is in the brain of him who behaves ill at divine worship.

Let us neither dissemble, nor be ungrateful. We derive an advantage from even such as these; an advantage great enough to induce us to waive every power, which college rules, university statutes, and the laws of the land give us over such culprits. It is never necessary for dissenting ministers in this town to teach their people reasons of dissent. Why should you puzzle yourselves, my brethren, with reading or hearing long dissertations on church discipline? Why compare the established hierarchy with the apostolic simplicity? Why trace this subject through the writings of your Owens, and Goodwins, and Watts's, and Doddridges? Behold a more popular way. Look at these members—members, yea ministers of the established church. *These are thy Gods, O Israel!*

* Is there an empty place in nature. † There is

....Behold your reasons of dissent held up in your places of worship to public view in characters of brass! *engraven with a pen of iron in the rock for ever!*

But I have done. Pardon the weakness of speaking about myself. Accept my thanks for indulging me with your attention so long. Assure yourselves, that my aim is to conciliate christians to each other; and the means proposed to you in order to enable you to obtain this end, are *gentleness, goodness, faith.* Ah! why is not every party amongst us, why are we not all, building in God's temple as the Jews of old in Solomon's, where *neither hammer, nor ax, nor any noise was heard in the building?* If this be not worth saying and doing any thing to obtain, I know not what is; and, if any be insensible to this; I leave him to the laws of his country, the reproaches of his companions, the regret of his conscience, and the mercy of God.

FINIS.

# SERMON III.

## CHRISTIANITY A SYSTEM OF HUMANITY.

Preached at *Salter's Hall, London*, March 3, 1779, in behalf of the Protestant Dissenting Charity Schools at Horsly-Down, Southwark.

MATTHEW xxv. 36.

*I was naked, and ye clothed me.*

BRETHREN,

THE apostle Paul gave a very just and beautiful notion of christianity, and of the primitive manner of propagating it, when he said, *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.*

Christianity, or that religion, which Christ taught, does not consist of the probable conjectures of attentive men exercising their reason: but it is a state of facts revealed by the supreme being, and spoken or written to mankind by persons, whose credentials attested beyond all reasonable doubt the divinity of their mission. I *speak* to wise men.

This religion is laid at the foot of all mankind, and the apostle requests an examination of it, *judge ye what I say*, see if there be any thing contained in it injurious to the known perfections of God, or to the allowed rights of his creatures. If there be,

I agree you should reject it; if not, I require you to admit and obey it.

Agreeably to this primitive notion of religion, we are going to-day to examine that argument for the religion of Jesus, which is taken from the BENEVOLENCE of it, and we shall endeavour to convince you, that the gospel is highly fitted to relieve the miseries of mankind, and to procure their felicity. We are naturally led into this train of thought by seeing these charity children; the school is a precious monument of the piety and humanity of our ancestors, erected in the spirit of him, who said, *I was naked and ye clothed me.*

Our Lord proposes to our view in this discourse three principal objects. First, the infirmities and miseries of men; they are exposed to *hunger*, *thirst*, *nakedness*, *sickness*, *imprisonment*, and so on. Next, his own real character; he is a man (we glory in it) he is the best of men, *the first born of every creature*, and his good heart commiserates the distresses of all his fellow-creatures; he makes their case his own, it was *I* who was hungry, and thirsty, and naked, and ye ministered unto *me*. Lastly, he describes the principles and practices of his real disciples; as if he had said, a succession of my followers will adopt my principles, enter into my views, imitate my example, become *workers together* with me, and for my sake will administer consolation to the miserable, and to them I shall in some future period say, I was naked and *ye* clothed me.

To this future period the whole subject leads, to

that day, *when the Son of man shall come in his glory, gather all nations before him, separate them one from another,* admit *the righteous into life eternal,* and send *the wicked away into everlasting punishment.* In view of this great day let us attend to the subject before us. Happy indeed could we realize the event, and act as if the time were at hand! O God! thou, who wilt *judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the gospel,* assist us by thy good spirit to perform this service acceptably to thee.

In order to enter thoroughly into the design of our blessed master, let us make mankind pass before us in four different views, agreeably to the four popular meanings of the word *naked,* and let us deliberately inquire what the gospel, if we gave it its way, would operate in behalf of each class.

I. Let us consider our species coming out of the hands of the creator, multiplying into a tribe, and spreading themselves over a supposed district, a herd of naked *uncultivated savages.* I beg pardon for speaking of literal nakedness in this assembly: but, permit me to remind you, gentlemen, every historian of mankind, your own not excepted, is obliged to begin here. Our nation is well educated, we have had noble tutors in every art and science, and Britons, highly polished already, are yet improving: but the state, which I am describing, was that of your ancestors in the days of Jesus Christ.

I cannot help lamenting here (by the way) the general disingenuousness of controversy, particu-

larly of that, which concerns the *dignity* of man. We dispute for ever, and we scorn to settle the point in debate by defining our terms. Dignity of *man* is a vague expression. Is it fair to affirm that of a Hottentot, which is true only of a Briton? Alas! what is the dignity of a thousand sunburnt animals, wandering for a scanty sustenance over ten thousand acres of desert, wild and uncultivated as the wilderness itself! Their bodies are all unclothed, their appetites all ungoverned, their minds all unprincipled, their immortality doubted or unknown. Their lands lie all untilled, their mines unwrought, their animals undisciplined, all the powers of nature are unemployed, not a fire burns, nor a river runs, nor a breath of air works for these vagabond lords. Strangers to every art, except that of slaughter, unacquainted with every science, except that of feasting on the entrails of their foes, and carousing with the blood of the last slain in the scull of the first, they go on from age to age, like other animals crawling into existence, like them suffering hunger and hardships, inconveniences of condition and inclemencies of season, and like them sickening, struggling, dying, and sinking into oblivion beneath the shade of a bush or in the den of a beast.

Suppose some superior being, possessed of perfect wisdom and generous communicative sentiments, descending from heaven to earth to reside a while among this abandoned race; suppose this being Jesus Christ, how think ye? would not his own principles and feelings lead him to civilize

them? My supposition is a fact. Jesus opened his generous soul to twelve first, then to seventy, and last to innumerable multitudes. They all *drank into his spirit; as many as were able went forth, and preached every where, to the wise and to the unwise;* to them there was *neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; Romans, Barbarians, and Scythians were all one to* them *in Christ Jesus*, and, had their influence been equal to their wishes, they would have persuaded *every knee in heaven and earth to bow, and every tongue to confess that Jesus Christ was Lord to the glory of God the Father.*

All this proceeded from their principles. A savage rises in value along with the evidences of his immortality. The doctrine, that dooms him to everlasting woe, renders him a greater object of pity than ever to those, who believe it. The possibility of recovering him to the image of God fires the breast of him, who admits it. The love, that Christ expressed by living and dying for all, constrains each one to live, and labour, and die for another. The serenity of a christian mind, and the peace of a converted bosom powerfully and perpetually preach, *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* The principles of christianity itself, then, are the noblest principles of civilization.

It may be asked, perhaps, what can mere principles, even these, what can they effect without civil power? Must not the magistrate accompany the missionary, or, if the preacher can do some-

thing, cannot the prince enable him to do more? To this we answer, we respect magistracy, and, in all civil affairs, in cases that affect life, liberty, and property, we allow the utility and necessity of civil government: but in this case of religion and conscience there is nothing for the magistrate to do. We want to reform the life of a savage by sanctifying his heart, and to sanctify his heart by fixing principles in his mind; now nothing is necessary to form principles in the mind except evidence, and christianity is so amply supplied with means of obtaining evidence, that it neither requires nor needs exterior aid. We have demonstrations arising from all parts, from prophecies and miracles, from the goodness of the doctrine, and the lives of the founders. Every christian carries evidence along with him. The spirit of Jesus inhabits every good man, weeps in his eye, smiles in his features, expands in his hand, and speaks, in a thousand significant actions of beneficence, a language, that every barbarian understands. A savage thus taught would soon perform acts of piety to God, and benevolence to his fellow creatures; and a whole tribe, going into this divine system of religion, would naturally become industrious, temperate, chaste, punctual, faithful, and social; this holy leaven would produce personal excellencies, social duties, the trade virtues of a merchant, the cool equity of a judge, and the liberal sentiments of a senator; in a word, it would produce in time a civil constitution truly British,

a constitution in which the happiness of the people would be the supreme law.

It will be objected, christianity possesses no other advantage on this article than paganism had. Cæsars and Alexanders civilized mankind. Alas! what civilizers were they! Their priests had nothing to teach, and, for their own parts, they butchered ninety of each hundred for the benefit of the surviving ten. Reformed christianity triumphs over paganism and popery too on this head. The papal community adopts the bloody methods of pagan government, applies them to religion and adds the senseless superstitions of modern apostates, so that nothing is more common in the journals of their missionaries than savages converted without light in the mind, or sanctity in the heart. Turn the heathen into a hypocrite, and the work is done. But *ye*, brethren, *have not so learned Christ.* Ye *spy the nakedness of a land:* but it is to cultivate and improve it. Into your sentiments, which are those of the twenty fifth of Matthew, multitudes have in all ages gone, and this school, founded by your ancestors, published to the whole world, that they apprehended, *their religion* taught them to humanize mankind, or, to use the language of the text, to *clothe the naked* image of the Son of God.

II. Let us consider men in a second point of light, as creatures in a state of *distress.* People in trouble lay aside ornaments, and hence one sense of the word *naked, I will wail and howl, I will go*

*stript and naked,* that is to say, being in *distress* I will lay aside usual *ornaments,* I will appear in public undressed, *comparatively* naked. Hence the prophet says, *strip ye, make ye bare, tremble, be troubled, lament for the pleasant fields,* and so on.

Who can count the miseries of mankind? Here sits one frozen with poverty, there lies another pining under sickness, a third is soured with disappointments in all his pursuits, a fourth is unhappy in his connections, a fifth is sinking under the weight of age and infirmities, and uttering these lamentable complaints, "Alas! how miserable an "old age is mine! I took some heedless steps in "my youth, my mind was blind, my heart depra- "ved. I have endeavoured all my life since to "avoid myself, and to flee from the misery of re- "flection. A while I succeeded, business and "amusements served to conceal the horrid void: "but now I am awake to reflection, all the powers "of my mind seem dead except that of recollec- "tion, my memory alone lives, and lives only to "haunt and torment me. I cannot recall the past, "I dare not face the future, annihilation shocks "me, and immortal misery is even more frightful "than that! I know I am rational and under a "law: but if there be a law there is a judge, if there "be a judge there are rewards, to which I have no "claim, and punishments, which I know I ought "to suffer. Would I were innocent, or would I "had never been!"

In this condition man becomes indifferent to

every thing. Take Absalom from David, take from Rachel her children, and life itself has no charms for them. Put a sense of sin and an apprehension of wrath into the bosom, let conscience boldly do its office in the decline of a mis-spent life, and lo! the lord of the creation strips himself of ornaments, wraps himself in sackcloth, and rolls himself in the dust. Business is a burthen, and a party for pleasure is in his account a company run mad. In vain he retires, and travels out of one great room into another, his *pain is perpetual, his wound incurable*, he hates to live, and he dares not die. What an object, what a pitiable object, my brethren, is this old man!

Will the Saviour of the world condescend to speak to this miserable wretch? He will, his gospel is his voice, the voice of a *good shepherd* sounding through all the wilderness, and seeking the ear of this lost sheep. Christians, reflect a moment, you have made the trial. Have you forgotten the day, when all trembling and afraid you followed the call, and found yourselves at the foot of the throne of grace. There he sat, the father and the friend, thence he reached his tender arms of mercy, and, with a voice *sweeter than honey and the honey comb*, said, I am come to bring *life and immortality to light by the gospel—I came that you might have life—The spirit of the Lord sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised*,

*to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Come now let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* In short, the whole gospel may be called a scheme of consolation for the miserable, and to provide for the propagation of it, and so for the consoling of the wretched, is in a noble sense to prepare *clothing for the naked.*

III. Let us hear what the gospel says to a third sort of naked destitute creatures. I mean the *wicked,* who rob, riot, and blaspheme, and commit all the crimes in their power. The scripture often speaks of righteousness under the notion of *clothing;* and the wicked are said to make *the shame of their nakedness appear.*

How horrid is the state of a profane sinner! In every light such a man is an object of just abhorrence: but there is one description of sin, which is supremely terrible. It is an attack on the *being* of God. Our old divines, Charnock particularly, call sin *deicide,* and they reason thus: every sinner goes according to his apprehended interest—it seems the interest of a sinner to have no judge—if God be naturally a judge it seems his interest to have no God—the sinner therefore wishes there were none. This dreadful notion is too well founded. Search thy *heart, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* Search and see, and be confounded at the sight. Libertine, didst thou never wish there were no law to prescribe rules for thy conduct, no uplifted arm to punish

thy violations of the law? Ah! when thou wast all inflamed with passion, and bent on the perpetration of vice, what if a wish could have performed the nameless deed!

We sometimes see in these men violent conflicts between reason and passion, conscience and inclination. Each resembles the man, *who had his dwelling among the tombs.* His wild fancy makes him climb an eminence, whence his fear precipitates him headlong down; the ragged stones cut him as he falls, and he shrieks with anguish; yet crying and raging with smart and pain, he climbs and tumbles, tumbles and climbs again.

Miserable soul! *Out-cast, whom no man seeketh after!* is *thy bruise incurable? Is there none to plead thy cause, hast thou no healing medicines?* Although *all thy lovers have forgotten thee, and seek thee not,* and God hath *wounded thee with the wound of a cruel one for the multitude of thine iniquity,* yet hear the substance of what the gospel says to thee.

Man in this state is an object of justice, yet he is also an object of pity, *and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.* Behold! Jesus Christ comes, and claims a right over this criminal. But what a right! a right to relieve him, a right of redemption. He produces authority from the Father, shews ability in himself, supports the unworthy wretch by his providence, addresses him in his word, dissolves his hard heart by his spirit, sets hell before him to awake his fear, opens the gates of heaven to him to kindle desire, reasons to con-

vince him, expostulates to melt him, now sets fire to his conscience, then cools his heart, and calms his fears, and by one or other of these means bows his soul to the obedience of faith. Christianity is the only system of religion, which provides at once for the majesty of God, and the miseries of men.

One cannot help remarking here, the illogical turn of infidels. Do we preach the pure morality of the gospel? That, say they, is our objection against it. It is a religion *too* holy, a system too sublime for frail imperfect men. We admire the morality of the gospel: but it is not practicable, therefore it is not divine. Do we preach pardon to the guilty, mercy to the miserable, do we say *all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men?* That, say they, is our objection against your gospel, it encourages libertinism. Vain pretences! Is it indeed difficult to distinguish the sinner from his sins, the body of the patient from the disease that infects it? Origen somewhere mentions and refutes this sophism by observing, that Christ is not the patron of libertinism although he pities the libertine. He visited this world as a wise tutor visits ignorant pupils, as the benevolent visit the poor, as physicians visit their patients. True, he came to dying, ignorant, abandoned sinners: but he came to impart eternal health, divine wisdom, immortal life. When we imitate him, and *convert a wicked man from the error of his way, we save a soul from death,* clothe a shameful naked wretch, *and hide a multitude of sins.*

IV. Let us advert a few minutes to a fourth class of our fellow creatures, to those who are innocently naked, and let us see what the gospel says concerning them. How many *half clad* fatherless children, how many destitute widows are necessarily or carelesly left in the crowd to make their way through fraud and oppression, through penury and contempt, as well as they can! Of all such Jesus Christ becomes the avowed advocate, calls himself their brother, and in this chapter pleads their cause. We bless God, he has not pleaded in vain. Thousands of the hungry have been fed, and ten thousands of the naked clothed in virtue of this plea. In all ages many have felt the force of my text, and, convinced that the naked are allied to Christ by sympathy, the strongest bond, have forwarded his great design. He said but a word, *inasmuch as ye* clothe MY naked BRETHREN, ye clothe ME, and lo! that one word became through successive ages meat and drink, clothing and comfort to multitudes, a royal foundation amply endowed for the widow and the orphan. So your ancestors understood it.

We come to the occasion of the present meeting, and we take pleasure in presenting to you the old puritanical sense of the text in fifty poor boys, formed into a school in the latter end of the reign of Queen Anne, then educated and clad by your parents, and now consigned to you.

Your ancestors, Gentlemen, the old puritans, whose successors have been since called nonconformists, and of late protestant dissenters, were a

noble race of men. I am sorry to say, few of your historians have done them justice, the most have written partially. These venal scribblers may be put into two classes, the first wilfully drop, or carelessly lose them; the last misrepresent and reproach them. We ask, *What evil have they done?* Were they ignorant and illiterate? Neither. Read their voluminous works and see. He must have a bold front, who dare charge them with want of literature. If they were equal to their contemporaries, justice is their due, if they excelled them, they have a right to honour. Had they fallen short of others, they had been objects of pity: but where would have been the crime? Were they enemies to piety? Alas! their zealous attachment to this was their sin, and procured from their adversaries the nick-name, puritan. Were they prone to sedition? ··Sedition!····Why, they of all men had the best notions of civil government, and yielded an uniform obedience to it. Whence then the partial treatment, of which we complain?····My brethren, these men were stern assertors of the civil and religious rights of mankind, they entered into the genius of the present British *civil* constitution (the CIVIL CONSTITUTION I say,) before it was brought to its present maturity, and along with that their history is incorporated. When our former princes strove to render themselves despotical, they declared against the tyranny, openly avowed that arbitrary government was unconstitutional, and that for their parts they would be free. The will of *God* revealed in scripture, was their reli-

gion, and the nation's happiness their civil law. From this line they never departed, no not all the time the race of Stuart intrigued, plundered and slew. This school was one of their latest efforts, and for this they were struggling when the last spark of that direful house went out.

Let it not shock you that they were persecuted. Men, who distinguish between a constitution and the guardians and administrators of it, who ad here to the first, which never varies, and are subject to the last, who often change, such men, being inconvertible, are sometimes in fashion and at other times antique. When the constitution flourishes they are in reputation, when that decays they sink along with it into honourable neglect or disgrace, and this is the case of all, even NOBLE FAMILIES, who are firm to the constitution.

When this school was founded, attempts were making to deprive the dissenters of the natural right of educating their own children. It was their glory not to submit to such a despicable slavery. It was matter of conscience, they therefore digested their plan, and determined to pursue it as usual *through evil report*, when lo! the good providence of God prevented their fears, dissipated the darkness of the times, and by the accession of the present royal family (whom God preserve!) enabled this school to make their first public appearance in Pinners's Hall on the joyful day of the coronation of his majesty King George the first. So Crosby, in his *History of the Baptists* tells us.

I think, it would be an affront to attempt to persuade this congregation to preserve this noble monument of the piety of their ancestors from falling into ruins. This city, all the world knows, is the seat of benevolence. Hither the distressed from all parts repair, and here they find liberal relief. This is the throne of commerce, a mine of inexhausted wealth, the seat of politeness and humanity, and in religious matters, I speak it to your praise, you act on enlarged principles, such as become Britons and Christians.

First, you consider, I know what this school cost your ancestors. It is a valuable *portion* of domestic liberty, *which* they *took* at the peril of their lives *out of the hand of the Amorite with their sword and with their bow.*

Next, you recollect, too, how comparatively easy it is to you to support it. You are freed from expensive fines, imprisonments, and persecutions, by which the property of the old nonconformists was wasted. Your trades have flourished some of you have acquired fortunes. and others are in the way of doing so. You have mercies without end, and, if all be not exactly as you wish, yet you are constitutionally right, and a sound constitution, give it time, will struggle and purify itself.

Lastly, you often contemplate a future state,and besides all the pleasures you enjoy in doing good on earth, you see at no great distance, that happy world to which you go, and in which Christ the judge will applaud your liberality.

With the highest satisfaction, christians, permit me to say, with the highest pleasure do my eyes survey this assembly. I rejoice in your health, prosperity and prospects. Long may you, and your families live happy in possession of every thing that constitutes human felicity! May God hear our prayers for you!·····But after all, after you have gone through all the business of life, and tasted all the pleasures of living, the day will come and you must die·····Great God! Methinks it is come····· Now what can constitute your happiness? Conceive, if you can, a happiness more refined than that mentioned in this chapter. Dead to this world, the disciple of Christ, in his dying agonies, looks into that, to which he approaches —sees *the Son of man sitting on the throne of his glory*—beholds *all nations gathered before him*—believes himself *set on the right hand of the judge* discovers these poor children, freed by his generosity from ignorance, vice, and misery, in the happy society—hears these transporting words from the mouth of the judge, *Come thou blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom··I was naked and you clothed me—Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.* Thus may each of you ascend to God to render him glory and honour for ever and ever! Amen.

# APPENDIX.

## A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE

## *CHARITY SCHOOL,*

At HORSLY-DOWN, Southwark.

IT was a part of the cruel policy of pagan despots, in times of the most remote antiquity, either to murder the children of their slaves, or to take them out of the hands of their parents, and to educate them so as to fit them for a tame submission to unexamined authority. The apostate church of Rome incorporated the latter part of this policy with a profession of christianity, and thence our ancestors in this country derived it. The reformation which brought to light the doctrines of primitive christianity, lifted along with them the natural rights of mankind into public view: but the right of openly teaching their own children how to worship God, seized from the papists with a laudable avidity by one party of the reformed, was refused to another party after the first had got themselves established by the secular powers.

Many a long year did the old nonconformists lie under this iniquitous oppression: but not without several humble remonstrances against the tyranny, and some violent struggles for their freedom. Even to this day the letter of the law "*prohibits upon pain of fine and imprisonment, all persons from teaching school unless they be licensed by the or-*

*dinary, and subscribe a declaration of conformity to the liturgy of the church, and reverently frequent divine service established by the laws of this kingdom.*" Dissenters, however, do teach school, because our governors have declared for the *spirit* of the act of *toleration* against the *letter* of the act of *uniformity*.

The first projectors of this school in the latter end of the reign of Queen Anne, were the Reverend Messieurs Maudit, Stinton, Parkes, Killinghall, Wallin and Sladen, whose praises are in all our churches. These gentlemen, all protestant dissenters, were of different sentiments in regard to baptism, three of them held infant baptism, and the other three the opposite. This union produced the generous liberal plan of the present school, in which no narrow bigotted notions operate: but instruction is open to all. If other parties cannot find *how two can walk together except they be agreed* in every article of faith and worship, we bless God, protestant dissenters can.

Having digested their plan, they laid it before their friends, and the promise of a subscription of more than a hundred a year was soon obtained. The subscribers then met, and chose six gentlemen managers, Messieurs Atkins, Hall, Leader, Sweet, Dell, and Valley, most of whose descendants are with us to this day. Mr. Hall was appointed treasurer, and a Mr. Robert Morgan master of the school. A house in Unicorn-yard was provided for a school for the boys, and for a dwelling for the master, a catechism was printed for the

instruction of the children, and forty boys were admitted. The next year the number was increased to fifty, and so it yet continues.

The boys admitted to this school were children of such poor persons as were not in a capacity to give them education themselves. They were to be annually clothed, taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, instructed in the principles of the christian religion, and at a proper time the managers were to give money to put them out apprentices. This plan has been invariably pursued to this time. The support of this school was to be derived from four sources. The first was by *collection at a lecture* to be preached every Lord's-day evening, by the six forementioned ministers, each in his turn. This lecture is yet continued *gratis*, by the twelve following ministers on the old catholic plan,

| | |
|---|---|
| The Rev. Drs. Hunter | Messrs. Macgowan |
| Watson | Rogers |
| Stennet. | Clark |
| Messrs. Pitts | Booth |
| Reynolds | Rippon |
| Richardson | Towle. |

The second was *annual subscription*, which, through the blessing of divine providence, has generally afforded an easy generous supply to the charity; but as subscriptions are always falling off by the deaths of subscribers, and by a thousand accidents beside, there is always room for new

names, and sometimes there are heavy discouragements for want of them.

*Donations* during life, and *legacies* at death were supposed a third probable source of supply. These have been given, and in a manner, that has done great good to the school, and great honour to the liberal benefactors.

The fourth was an *annual collection* after a charity sermon to be preached on the occasion. The first of these was preached at Pinner's Hall on the 20th. of October, 1715, the day of the coronation of his majesty King George I. The reverend Mr. Matthew Clark preached the sermon, and twenty eight pounds fourteen shillings was collected. The annual discourse has been uninterruptedly preached and the foregoing sermon was delivered this year on the occasion.

The managers have successively paid the most conscientious attention to the original design, and by an unwearied assiduity, a great generosity and a wise frugality have been able to give the subscribers the following pleasing state of their school.

| | |
|---|---|
| There have been put out apprentices | 339 |
| Discharged and otherwise provided for | 453 |
| There are now in the school | 48 |
| So that the whole number educated, including those now in the school | 840 |

The redemption of twelve hundred boys in a century from ignorance and vice, the rendering of even half the number useful members of society,

the administering of consolation to so many poor parents, the enabling of the children to read the holy scriptures, and to understand the principles of religion are noble actions, and whether it be not worth while to perform them, let all the world judge. Frugality is the natural support of liberality, and a little attention to this plain maxim would enable many to subscribe to charities of this kind who at present do not.

FINIS.

# SERMON IV.

CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Preached at *Cambridge*, Jan. 30, 1780.

ROM. xiii. 1—7.

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God; a revenger to* execute *wrath upon him that doeth evil, Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is* due; *custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

WE have been often told, christians, that good men, and particularly ministers of religion, have

nothing to do with what they call politicks or civil government. We beg leave to disclaim this groundless opinion, and to offer at least one argument against it. Good men are bound by the religion of Jesus Christ to discharge those duties, which as good subjects they owe to their civil governors: but it is impossible to discharge an obligation as good men, that is, wisely and virtuously, without knowing the nature, the extent, and the motives of it. Ministers are both bound, in common with other christians, to perform the duties of good subjects, and also to explain the nature and enforce the practice of them on others. How can they do so, unless they understand the subject themselves, and publickly treat of it in the course of their ministrations? What! was not the writer of the epistle to the Romans a good man? Was not he an inspired minister of Christ? Yet he addressed all christians in these words, *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.* And so on.

Let us then apply ourselves to the subject, and let me suppose you will give such attention to it as its importance demands. If any occasional hearers ridicule either the subject itself, or the plain manner in which it will be taught, we glory in affirming, we have no feelings on this occasion. We speak to be understood, and if we be so happy

as to convey our ideas, to inform any of their duty, and engage them to practise it, we have our reward. May the Governor of the Universe, the God of order, condescend to write the doctrine on all our hearts!

I freely confess, my brethren, I never read the text without emotions of pity. Pity that such writers as St. Paul, pity that such a wise and well written period as this, naturally so conducive to the good of society, should be so perverted and misconstrued as they have been by self-interested expositors! In the times of our ancestors, in the days of despotism, thousands and tens of thousands have been expended in hiring pens to pervert, or in rewarding them for perverting, the sacred oracles of God, and thus St. Paul has been converted into a conspirator against the rights of mankind, and made to affirm, that those Britons who *resisted* the unconstitutional polity of a Stuart, that such protestants as refused to practise the superstitions of a popish prince, *should receive to themselves eternal damnation.* What could be done in the dilemma, into which some of our former kings had brought themselves? Either the bible must be taken away from the people, or the people must be taught that it spoke a language suited to the views of their rulers. But God forbid we should think St. Paul an enemy to civil and religious liberty! He derived his sentiments of government from the most just and humane of all rulers, and he was an inconvertible divine, for

his gospel was in all countries and at all times *yea and Amen.* In order to give you a just notion of his doctrine, we shall lay down three propositions, and explain them as we go on.

I. *The Apostle speaks in the text of* GOVERNMENT, *not of governors.* This is the true key of the thirteenth of Romans, and with this the whole period, that has been read to you, softly opens to the hand of a child. *Let every soul be subject to civil government—there is no government but of God—the governments that be are ordained of God. Whosever therefore resisteth government, resisteth the ordinance of God—Wilt thou have nothing to fear from government? Do that which is good, and thou shall have praise of the same.*

That this is the meaning of the apostle is evident, I think, from the following considerations. First, the propositions laid down in the text are not true of all civil governors: but they are all both true and useful, if applied to government itself. Let us try one or two for example.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the *ruler, Nero?* Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of Nero. Paul knew better than to affirm this: but take the words in the other sense, and they contain a truth of excellent use. Wilt thou then not be afraid of *government?* Do that which is good, and thou shalt enjoy the benefit of government: perhaps share the honours of it.

Thus again, *The powers that be are ordained of God.* The Apostle could not mean to affirm, that

the civil governors then reigning in the world had been immediately ordained of God to reign. Some of them had risen to govern by the choice of the people, others by the adoption of their predecessors, and others by fraud and bribery, violence and blood: but no missionary from heaven had called out and anointed any one of them.

Nor could the apostle mean to affirm, that any form of civil government was of divine appointment, for there had been in the world before his time, and there were when he wrote these words, as there have been ever since, various forms of civil government: but none of them of divine institution. Civil government is one thing, and the mode of administering it another. The first is an institute of God, the last a mere effect of human reason. The forms of administering government are generally reducible to three. There is the monarchical, in which one monarch governs, either by himself, and then it is an absolute monarchy, or with the assistance of others, and then it is a mixt monarchy. There is the aristocratical, which is in the hand of nobles. There is lastly the democratical, where the administration of government is, by the suffrages of the people, put into the hands of a body selected from themselves. Neither of these is of divine appointment, for all the revealed institutes of God are contained in the bible, and there we have no command on this subject. The truth is, the best mode of governing is a matter of reasoning and not of faith, and the divine spirit has not wasted the noble gift of inspi-

ration upon unnecessary subjects. Mankind are left here to the use of their reason, and reason is sufficient on this article without revelation, as we have seen in many pagan governments.

Of all, who have taught the divine right of any mode of government, surely those foreign declaimers, who affirm the divine right of absolute monarchy, are the most unhappy of mankind in the choice of their arguments. They leave the ground of christian action, the new testament; they appeal to maxims of Jewish polity long since abolished, and involve themselves in the difficulty of reconciling ancient Jewish history to their own notion. They could not choose a book less to their purpose, as it would be easy in a multitude of instances to shew.

We are then to suppose St. Paul speaking of civil government in general. *The powers that be are ordained of God,* is as much as to say, civil government in every country, let it be vested where it may, is agreeable to the original design of the wise Creator, who formed mankind for society, and disposed them so as to render order and government necessary. Observe a family. The children have wants: but no means of supplying them. The parents have power to supply those wants, and are disposed to administer to the children. Look into a manufactory, that employs ten thousand persons. One thousand are formed capable of comprehending and performing only a small inconsiderable part of the labour of the work; another thousand are equal to another narrow circle,

they form the next link in the chain: but there is one man who seems to have as much soul as providence has bestowed on all the rest; he comprehends the whole, and is therefore naturally formed to arrange, dispose, direct and govern all. The same may be said of a general and his army, an admiral and his fleet, a prince and his people, and hence arise the noble works of all sorts, that cover the earth, and the moral obligations that unite man to man. Indeed genius without strength would be a source of misery, as strength without skill would be a weight of mischief. The distribution, that providence has made of wisdom to one, patience to another, courage to a third, strength to a fourth, fancy and fire to this man, corrective coolness of judgment to that, and so on, affords a full demonstration that reciprocal aid was originally intended to be established by the Creator, that the subordination of some and the superiority of others were first principles of creation, and consequently that he who resisteth civil order and government, *resisteth the ordinance of God;* just as the man, who revels through the night, and sleeps all the day, *resisteth*, as far as he can, *the ordinances of heaven*, * that is, the *order* of darkness and light established in the heavens by the Creator of the world.

Of this conformity to order the apostle was a passionate admirer, and of this he speaks in the text. In the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians he treats of the order and

* Jer. xxxiii. 25.

beauty of *nature*, of things celestial and things terrestrial, and observes, that there is an order analogous to it established in the church, a *spiritual* order pervading, cementing, and adorning the whole, from the first Great Spirit to the last resurrection. There is *God all in all*—there is a *Son subject unto him*—there is a second *Adam*, the head of a new world, in which *every man* is placed *in his own order—Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* In the twelfth chapter of the same epistle, he treats of *moral* order directed by christian doctrine, under the beautiful similitude of a natural body governed by reason, in which *the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.* In this chapter he speaks of *civil* order, the arrangement of human societies, and, agreeably to his general favourite notion of analogy, calls it an *ordinance* of God, by which he means to affirm, that civil government is founded on the nature of things, and that there is a fitness between that and those abilities and dispositions, which the Creator hath formed in mankind. Were the world all innocent, civil government would naturally rise out of eminent abilities and virtues (for there might be degrees of excellence where all were good.) If the world were all vicious, government (such as it would be) would necessarily rise out of dread of injury. The world in its present state is both strengthened by virtue and endangered by vice, and both render government necessary. Here are

black crimes, producing great injuries; it is natural for the defenceless to desire protection from these, and it is just, and therefore an institute of God, that the strong should defend the weak. Here are small degrees of intelligence and virtue wishing to be directed and emboldened to excel, and here are superior abilities and qualities ready to direct and improve them. He, therefore, that resisteth civil government, resisteth the manifest design of God, which is to gratify the lawful wishes of all mankind, to intimidate vice, to cherish virtue, and so to produce social felicity.

What! do all civil governments produce these effects? And does St. Paul mean to affirm, that any sort of polity renders society happy? Our answer will be contained in the second proposition, to which let us proceed.

II. *The apostle speaks in the text of a* GOOD *civil government.* The proofs of this lie in the text, and the least attentive may perceive them. St. Paul's *powers are of God.* Did *God* ever commission vice, and give legal powers to illegal actions? The apostle's *rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil: ministers of God to us for good:* and to these we are to be *subject for conscience sake.* It must therefore be a good government, of which he speaks; for the *conscience* of a christian can never be bound over to vice and misery.

Two questions naturally arise here, first, what is a good civil government? next, who is to judge when a civil government is good?

In answer to the first we beg leave to observe, that we are not now to treat of this question in a political but in a moral view. They, who investigate the subject as politicians, compare monarchy with aristocracy, and both with a democratical government, and determine for one in preference to the other two: but a christian view of government regards less the mode of administration, than the order administered. In this view we affirm a monarchy is a good government, and it is not; an aristocracy is a good government, and it is not; and so of the last, for each may produce social happiness, and either may destroy it.

In general the goodness of a government depends on two things—the good *principles*, which constitute it—and the proper *powers*, that realize these principles, and reduce them to practice in actual administration. Mankind have certain native inherent rights, securities of these rights are the first principles of a good constitution: but as the best constitution, like every thing human, may degenerate, a government is only good, when it retains power to reduce its principles to practice.

To be more particular. That we call a good government, which places the *person* of each individual in security. This article includes the life and limbs, the health and reputation of every innocent member of society. *Powers*, that preserve all these, *are of God*, for these are his gifts, and they are the natural rights of all mankind.

Again, that is a good civil government, which

insures to the citizen his personal *liberty*, and subjects none to the fear of arbitrary imprisonment or exile. How miserable are those countries, in which innocent subjects may be instantly deprived of their liberty, rent from their families, and driven either to perish in a dungeon, or to quit their native soil, at the despotical mandate of a passionate ruler!

A good civil government protects each individual in the absolute enjoyment and disposal of his *property*. Property is the ground of power, and power will always follow property. A people, who would enjoy freedom, can never be too cautious in disposing of their property. While they hold it themselves, they hold the golden sceptre of government: when they transfer it to their rulers, and alienate it from themselves, they exchange that sceptre of gold for a rod of iron, which, not unfrequently, smites and punishes them for their folly.

That is a good civil government, which allows and protects the rights of *conscience*. This is one of the dearest rights of an intelligent being, and the fullest enjoyment of it cannot, in a well ordered state, include any civil disability; on the contrary, a good conscience is the best qualification of a magistrate. Nothing can contribute more to the moral good of a nation than freeing conscience from all human restraints, and it may justly be questioned, whether the sad want of religious principle, and the consequent depravity of manners, of which some whole nations complain, be not in a

great measure owing to arbitrary impositions on conscience, the setting of human authority in this throne of Almighty God.

That we rightly deem a good civil government, which renders *justice* cheap to the poor, easy to the illiterate, accessible to all. No government can be good, unless it includes an universal responsibility, and provides for the display of publick virtue, or the detection of publick iniquity, by subjecting all to account for the wealth, the power, and the trust committed to them for the general good. Government is so far perfect or imperfect as it renders the calling of administrators to account easy or difficult.

These are a few outlines of such a government as St. Paul meant in the text. To such a government and to no other do his propositions agree. Let us suppose a state the reverse of all this, and let us see how little like a man, a christian, or an apostle, St. Paul would seem, were he to speak thus. *The powers that be are ordained of God* to imprison, to banish, and to kill the citizens. *Whosoever resisteth the power*, that oppresseth the consciences, and wastes the property of the people, *resisteth the ordinance of God. Let every soul be* so *subject to* these *higher powers*, as to place them above the reach of law, beyond the power of all human restraint.

Alas! how little must they know the apostle, who imagine he taught such a doctrine as this! His gospel would then have been *yea*, and his politicks *nay*, that is, the one would have consisted

of principles the most just and liberal, the other of principles directly opposite, and had power once protected the iniquitous side, there would not have remained to mankind in future, so much as one gleam of hope of redemption from abounding vice and misery.

We ask further, who is to judge when a government is good? We answer, in an absolute monarchy the monarch alone; in an aristocracy the nobles only; in a democracy the people: but, in a mixed state, in which the excellencies of the three are united, judging in ordinary cases belongs to delegates, and in extraordinary cases it reverts to the people, the allowed origen of power, agreeably to that original contract, real or supposed, by which the people agreed to confer, and the delegates to accept certain honours and emoluments for the discharge of prescribed services, of the punctual performance of which conditions the contractors are to judge. Natural justice requires a stipulated service for a stipulated sum, and it would be miserable folly in contracting parties to deprive themselves of the right of judging whether the stipulated conditions were performed. Take away the power of inspecting and coercing the conditions of a contract, and the remaining right of making one is at best only a power of self deception, and it may be in many cases an engine of self destruction.

The writer of our text was a private citizen, and to private citizens he addressed this epistle: yet he treats here of government in general, and the

duty of rulers in particular, and he adds the *cause*, the reason, for which his readers were to *pay tribute*. In the apostle's system, the people were to judge to whom *honour* and *tribute* were due, they were to *render* what they thought due to each degree of magistratical merit, and they were to *pay* what tribute they judged necessary. The rulers were not to hire the people; but the people, who held the publick purse, were to pay tribute to the rulers. Indeed, christians at Rome had lost, along with the rest of their fellow citizens, the power of restraining the iniquity of their rulers: but they had never relinquished the right of judging when they deserved restraint. A good government, like a good religion, or a fair trade, deals very little in secrets: it *commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God*, and on this account our text informs us, we *must needs be subject for conscience sake*. This leads us to the last article.

III. *The non-resistance inculcated in the text must be* RESTRAINED TO THE SUBJECT, *of which the apostle speaks*. The laws of right reasoning require us to put no more in the conclusion than the premises contain. The reasons of a duty are a sort of premises, the practice of it a kind of conclusion. The apostle therefore means to exhort us never to resist: but always to support a *good* civil government.

Suppose a state, in which rulers were not a terror to *evil* works, but to *good;* can we imagine an apostle would exhort a people able to right

themselves in this manner? *Wilt thou have nothing to fear from authority? Do that which is* EVIL, *and thou shalt have praise of the same. But if thou do that which is* GOOD, *be afraid, for the ruler is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth* GOOD. *Wherefore, ye must needs be subject for conscience sake, for, for this cause pay ye tribute.* Should men pay for the violation of their rights? And would an apostle cherish the dominion of sin? My brethren, we congratulate you, that ye are Britons—that your constitution, the wisdom of ages, was fully elucidated at the happy æra of the revolution—that the people were then allowed to be the origin of power, having a right to claim redress of grievances, and in extraordinary cases to redress themselves. Then the just sentiments of St. Paul were interwoven in the bill of rights, and the bible and the senate united to declare, *rulers* shall *be ministers of God to us for* GOOD, *and for this cause will* WE PAY THEM *tribute.* Rulers shall hold the power, and the people the purse.

To illustrate this part of our subject, let us divide it into the two great branches of *civil* and *religious* liberty, and let us exemplify both in our apostle. In regard to *religious* liberty, we may observe—that St. Paul was not of the religion of the prince—that his religion was destructive of paganism, the established religion—and that he devoted his whole life to propagate his own, and consequently to diminish that of the rulers. If this was resistance, St. Paul resisted; but this was

not the resistance which he spoke against in the text. There he censures a resistance of a good government: but a good government, by allowing the rights of conscience retains nothing on this article to be resisted by a good man. If the apostle, in exercising the rights of his own conscience, did not injure the rights of other men; if he made use of no civil coercion to propagate his doctrine; if he raised no tumult, no sedition; but confined himself to the calm methods of reasoning and conversing on, preaching, publishing and practising what he thought religious truth, he should not have fallen a sacrifice to the envy or resentment of his enemies, his blood should not have stained the pretended government of Rome. Thus his own practice explained his doctrine, and he thought himself a good subject although he kept none of the festivals of the emperor Nero, in whose reign he wrote the text. The festivals! the institutes! the religion of Nero! What are we saying? Even Tacitus, a pagan, and every other Roman historian would reprove us; they never thought Nero had any religion, they considered him as a bad man, unworthy of the honours, which had been conferred on him. St. Paul thought him a *lion*,* reigning over men as beast over beast, where appetite and strength are instead of reason and law. Paganism, my brethren, made such men high priests, and placed them at the head of the religion of whole countries, and popery, which is paganism disguised, hath copied the example. Hence ideots

* 2 Tim. iv. 17.

and atheists have been the reputed wisdom of a nation, and the most iniquitous of men the standards of piety to God and benevolence to their fellow creatures. Were it possible for Paul to insult my reason and my conscience by requiring my conformity to the religion of such rulers as catholicks adore, even Paul should be no apostle to me.

Let us advert a moment to *civil* liberty. Let us suppose our apostle admitted to an interview with a number of Roman senators, proposing to them the christian religion, and endeavouring to recommend it in some such manner as this. "Illustrious Romans! The religion, which I have the honour to propose to you, is the wisdom of God, and its object is the production of the greatest social happiness. In every point of view, permit me to affirm, it excels that, which you profess: and there is one article, that is, civil liberty, on which christianity sheds the brightest glory. Your ancestors thought mankind were born with certain inherent rights, they considered the security of these rights the end of civil government; when magistrates invaded them, they reclaimed the power, with which they had intrusted them, and placed it in other hands under new restrictions. Your highest notion of a supreme magistrate is, that he is a father, and not a destroyer of his country, and your poets and historians, your theatres and senates all unite in celebrating the praises of such men. A lover of his country is a saint, a hero, a deity with you. But christianity reverses

all these ideas. It allows, indeed, that ye were born with as many rights as your predecessors, and one more, a right to enjoy this invaluable religion: but it requires you to renounce your notions of *government*, and to submit in all cases whatever to your civil rulers for the time being. If the emperor allow you to live, bless his clemency; if he unjustly cut off whole families, and depopulate whole provinces, you must not even attempt to restrain him; if he, contrary to your laws, imprison or banish your persons, take away and expend your property, reduce you from the first city in the world to the lowest of all states, you may feel your miseries: but you must not complain; or if you complain, you must not be allowed to do more; in no case may you redress your own grievances, no, not though providence and the constitution have put the means of redress amply in your own power."·····According to this account, the old Romans would have been put into a worse condition by Jesus Christ than they had been in before his coming, and to have gone from paganism to christianity would have been like going *down from Jerusalem to Jericho, falling among thieves*, to be *stripped of raiment, wounded, and left half dead.*

Christianity is so far from sinking the dignity and felicity of man, that it conducts him to a pinnacle of glory. It teaches him a class of moral virtues, such as industry, frugality, equity, and so on. It excites him to practise these by revealing the strongest motives, such as the love of God,

the example and the death of Jesus Christ, a state of future rewards and punishments. The practice of these virtues is the way to acquire property, and property in the hand is power of civil resistance. When it is proper to make use of this power, and in what manner, we will not presume at present to inquire; suffice it to say, it must be legal, constitutional and good, otherwise it would not be the resistance of which we have been speaking.

Let us conclude. Out of our subject three reflections naturally arise, each exciting a different emotion. The first stirs up pity and horror, the second gives us pleasure, the last affects us with a mild sensibility, for which we have no name.

1. Who can help lamenting, in the first place, the deplorable condition of mankind in respect of good government. On the one hand, thousands, in all countries, destitute of all governing abilities, are aspiring to dominion, or, having obtained it, calling authority government, and confounding power to do good with a sort of indefeasible right to do wrong. On the other hand, millions of intelligent creatures devoid of all pride of nature and sense of shame, bartering the noblest rights of our species for a smile, and a bauble, and a luxury for a day.—Hence *folly is set in dignity, and the rich sit in low place.*—Hence *the tears of such as are oppressed, who have no comforter,* for on the *side of their oppressors there is power.*—Hence is *seen under the sun the place of judgment, that wicked-*

*ness is there, and the place of righteousness that iniquity is there.*—Hence *oppressions making wise men mad.* Hence, in a word, the ills that blast religion and learning, labour and commerce, and all the other efforts of the few to make the many happy. Can ye conceive, brethren, a lower degree of wretchedness than that, with which a prophet formerly upbraided his countrymen: *ye have sold yourselves for nought!* Ah! would to God this were the utmost that sordid men could do! Cruel Jews! had ye sold yourselves alone, ye would have suffered, and we might have profited by your example: but your guiltless countrymen, your wives, your children, your innocent posterity yet unborn, must they be all involved in your punishment as if they had perpetrated your crime! ·····Here we feel the want of a religion, that opens to our faith a future state, where *the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.*

2. Great God! First and best of beings! Permit our weeping eyes to look to thee as the God of order, the patron and protector of all who endeavour to gather up right notions, and to re-establish that fitness, which sin had subverted, and wantonly thrown in shattered ruins all over the globe! Christians, the empire of God is an empire of order, and the gospel of Christ is intended to diffuse it among all ranks and degrees of men. The perfections of the Great Supreme are engaged to give this noble design effect. Have they, think ye, spent all their force? Turn from this present scene of confusion and woe—enter into your clo-

sets—fix your attention on the King of Kings, who disdains to reign by power alone, and who makes *judgment and justice the bases of his throne.* Behold! HE condescends to treat his intelligent creatures like men, and makes them judges between him and his vineyard.* The Son, too, the *express image* of the Father, intends to *deliver up the kingdom,*† and to display the rectitude of his government of it, in the sight of angels and men. Then *every eye shall see him,* and, although they, who resisted his wise and benevolent plan, shall wail and mourn, yet he will persevere in his first design, he will cause every one to give account of his deeds done in the body, and he will render to all their dues, honour to whom honour, and shame to whom shame is due. Thus will he assort mankind, and cause in a future state universal justice through everlasting ages to reign. Delightful prospect! Believer! fill thine eye with this object, and catch a flame, that shall never go out.

In the present momentary state, Providence, indeed, sometimes permits society to fall into dreadful disorders, which, like floods, first overflow the low grounds, and at last roll back, sap and subvert the proud mountains whence they fell, mixing all in one general confusion; for despotical principles are as fatal to thrones as to cottages, a while they afflict the last, but in the end they never fail to crumble the first into ruins. Fear nothing, then, my countrymen, from foreign foes. The thrones of Bourbon are not the powers we

* Isa. v. † 1 Cor. xv.

choose, they are *thrones of iniquity*, shall they *have fellowship with God?* So many lives as they have unjustly cut off, so much publick property as they have misapplied, so much liberty as they have taken from mankind, so many upright consciences as they have oppressed, so much fraud and violence as they have practised, so much human felicity as they have destroyed, just so much guilt have they acquired, and so much punishment, sooner or later, will the Omnipotence, that supports the just order of the universe, inflict on them. I fear nothing from their arms; but their principles, their maxims of government I fear. Ah! should my countrymen ever imbibe the errors of their *government* (so they call their *power*,) and the vices that give those errors effect, we should be poisoned in our vitals, and then, who could help exclaiming, Britain *is falling*, *is falling?* ····Oh! no, my country must not fall····or, if it fall, let me fall with it, and be intombed in its ruins! Let me have the honour of entering the world of order struggling for what gives that world all its beauty and glory.

3. Finally, we reflect with an emotion made up of pleasure, gratitude, hope and fear, on the recovery to order, civil and sacred, begun in civil government by right reason in the world, and in the hearts of good men by christian faith. Our ancestors, like others, were sunk in stupidity and sin; half were tyrants and half were slaves: but on them the light of reason and the religion of Jesus Christ shone, and we, my brethren, we are

entered into their labours. We enjoy the benefits of their reasoning, writing, sufferings and blood. Why are we not a nation all wise and good! Why not all burning with zeal for the welfare of our country, and attached to all the principles that brought it out of the darkness of despotism into the broad day of light and liberty! Divine order! where shall we find thee? In our bosoms? In our families? In our churches? In the whole world? Would to God it might pervade all! It gives us pleasure to see it in so many. It excites our gratitude to God the author for what we have, and our hope that it will increase more and more. Yet we behold with reverence and fear; for order begun in us, resembles the morning of a spring day, it has obscurity clouds and rain, the remains of a winter just gone, and brightness and beauty, the beginnings of a summer, now at hand. May God, of his infinite mercy, succeed every effort to extend a virtuous order! May he free us all from the immoderate passion of subduing others, and give us grace to govern ourselves. To him be honour and glory for ever! Amen.

# SERMON V.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CEREMONIES.

Preached at Dr. *Fordyce's Meeting, Monkwell-street, London,* Dec. 25, 1780.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 3, 4.

*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

THE English translation of the New Testament is, in general, so faithful, that it would not be right to shake the popular confidence in it. The facts recorded by the Evangelists are clearly narrated; the reasonings of the Apostles on these facts in their Epistles are properly and honestly expressed; the spirit of the original breathes in the translation, and the whole work will always do honour to the abilities of the translators, and convey just sentiments of christianity to English readers.

It must, however, be allowed, that this translation with all its excellencies is a human work, and partakes of human frailty; we ought not therefore to be surprized if we discover here and there an imperfection; a wrong sense of a word; a misconstruction of a sentence; or an impropriety of any sort that escaped the attention of the translators.

I speak thus, because a learned friend some time ago suggested that our text was among the number of mis-translated passages. His conjecture on examination appeared well founded; however, I would not presume to make a new reading the ground of a public discourse, had I not first privately consulted several able judges, and had I not also recollected, that the doctrine we are going to teach does not rest on this reading: but, should the reading be rejected, stands firmly supported by the whole of divine revelation.

We think our text should be rendered thus; *If our gospel be* VAILED, *it is* VAILED AMONG THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOLISHED, BY WHICH *the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not*, and so on.

There are two general sources of arguments in defence of this sense of the passage: the first is merely literary, and for that reason improper in this place; the second is easy and obvious, it is the scope of the writer; of this let us try to make a right judgment.

In the foregoing chapter, the Apostle treats of the two œconomies, the Jewish and the christian, and gives the preference to the latter, as for other reasons, so chiefly on account of its superior clearness and perspicuity. *Moses, who spoke to the children of Israel, put a vail over his face*, and taught his doctrine by signs; but Christ, and *all* his Apostles, *with uncovered face*, that is, without signs, *use great plainness of speech*. Moses addressed the senses of the jews with ceremo-

nies that were to be *abolished;* but these ceremonies are *done away* in christianity, and the teachers of it bend all their attention to make plain simple *truth manifest.* Moses established a local œconomy, and addressed his ministry to the *children of Israel* only; but christianity is an universal religion, and the propagators of it *commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Is christianity, then, (it may be asked) a religion contrary to that of the Jews? The God, the Mediator, the doctrine, the morality, of christians, do they differ from those of the Jews? God forbid! Judaism, says our Apostle, was a glorious œconomy: but christianity *exceeds it in glory.* It is so much more excellent, as it is more plain, intelligible, and clear. Christians worship the same God, believe in the same Mediator, hold the same doctrines, and practise the same morality as the pious Jews always did. Christianity and judaism are not two religions; but one religion in two different degrees of perfection. The one was the gay blossom; the other is the rich fruit: the one was the design; the other the execution.

What! (it would be objected further by a Jew) do you, Paul, affirm that the birth of your Jesus, and his life, the doctrine, the miracles, the manner and the nature of his death, the dissolution of the Mosaical œconomy, and the incorporating of all gentile nations into one body of divine worshippers, do you affirm, that all these were foretold by our prophets, believed by our ancestors, and

included in the religion of our nation? The far greater part of our nation have denied this, and have *crucified* your *Lord of glory!* To this natural objection supposed, our text seems to contain an answer. It is as if the Apostle had said, our gospel was actually contained in your law, and, if it lay concealed from the bulk of the nation, it was owing to their want of discernment, they *could not look to the end of the ceremonies, which are now abolished.* Their puerile minds were dazzled with the splendor of ceremonies, and never penetrated into the truths concealed under them. The grand adversary of mankind availed himself of this popular prejudice, and by heating their passion for pomp in religion, blinded their minds by means of the very ceremonies which were intended to inform them. *If our gospel be hid* from the Jews, *it is hid* by Jewish ceremonies, which, though formerly appointed by divine statute law, are, now Christ is come, *abolished,* and rendered obsolete. *By these* ceremonies, while they stood, *the god of this world blinded the minds of unbelievers, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,* contained in prophecies, and sacrifices, *should shine unto them.*

Our text, then, does not speak of final impenitence; but of the abuse of Jewish ceremonies. To this subject we will confine our attention; and we will endeavour to justify the worship of our nonconformist churches, by giving an answer to this plain question, *Why do we respect the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, and reject the same cere-*

*monies in the christian religion?* Having discussed this question, we shall close with a few practical remarks. God grant we may be *built up in our most holy faith!*

I. *We respect Jewish ceremonies, because they were appointed by God; and we reject the same ceremonies in christian worship, because they are not appointed by him.* In natural religion mankind are left to exercise reason, and to form a ritual by conjecture; but in revealed religion reason is silent, the Deity speaks, and conjecture is at an end. If God condescend to instruct men how to worship him, obedience to his will is the highest exercise of reason, and essential to religion.

It was glorious to Moses, the messenger of God, to publish his new religion *in the land of Ham*, at that time the most learned and the most idolatrous country in the world, consequently the best able and the most likely to detect imposture. Thither, *into the chambers of the king*, the man of God went, *thus saith the Lord* in his mouth, and *the rod of God* in his hand. There *he brought forth frogs in abundance, flies of divers sorts, darkness upon the land, and death upon the firstborn.* There, in the name of God, he claimed civil and religious liberty for his nation, *Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son; let my son go, that he may serve me:* and there, when Pharaoh replied, *I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go*, he confirmed his mission by miracles, became *a god to Pharaoh*, and forced even magicians to exclaim, *This is the finger of Jehovah!*

*This is that Moses, who was in the church in the Wilderness, and who received the lively oracles of God to give unto* the Jews. Thus, by divine commission, he appointed the Jewish ritual, and ordained positive institutes by what only could authenticate them, the supreme will of God, the sole legislator to mankind.

Moses never proposed to appoint a ritual for the last ages of the world. *A Prophet,* said he, *shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me,* a legislator as I am, *him shall ye hear.* In the fullness of time this legislator came with divine commission to new model religion. He dissolved the old œconomy, established a new one on a larger and more comprehensive plan; and, in abundant compassion to the whole species of mankind, made the world a present of a religion that contained all the excellencies and none of the incumbrances of the former œconomy. That was *a ministration of death,* which doomed thousands of animals literally to be killed in sacrifice: this is *a ministration of life,* requiring no animal to die, but inviting millions of rationals by instruction to live.

The founder of the christian church appointed no Jewish ceremonies to be performed in divine worship; yet (as our protestant ministers have always argued against the church of Rome) express positive divine law is essentially necessary to religious institutes. It is not enough to say, a rite is not forbidden, it must be commanded; and we may honestly reason, *where there is no* divine *law* or-

daining a ceremony, *there is no transgression* in neglecting to perform one.

The supreme power in the primitive christian church, not only omitted to appoint a new ceremonial; it went further, and actually abrogated in form the old ritual of the Jews. The case was this: In the church at Antioch, where the disciples of Jesus first received the honourable appellation of christians, some converted pharisees, prejudiced in favour of their old religion, taught the brethren, that circumcision and keeping the law of Moses, were necessary to salvation. Paul and Barnabas denied this doctrine, and after much altercation, both sides agreed to lay the matter before the whole apostolical synod at Jerusalem. In that venerable assembly the question was fully discussed. Never was a question of greater importance laid before a synod; never were judges so equal to the investigation. The extraordinary abilities of Peter and Paul, Barnabas and James, directed and assisted by the Holy Ghost, were employed on this occasion. In the end, an unanimous resolution was formed into a decree, and sent in writing to the churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. This decree declares—that *no commandment to keep the* ceremonial *law* (no other law could possibly be meant) had proceeeded from the Apostles—that such a commandment had been *a trouble* to the church, and tended to *subvert the souls* of the disciples—that *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost*, and to the synod, *to lay no such burden* on christians—and that, *if they*

*abstained* from a few offensive customs, which were merely local and temporary, they should do well. When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, and delivered this epistle to the multitude to read, they perused it with pleasure, and *rejoiced for the consolation.* A high satisfaction indeed, to be freed by such authority from *a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear!*

Here then, christians, is your discharge from Jewish ceremonies: this is your reason for rejecting the rites of Moses. It seems good to the Holy Ghost to publish, and to you to enter into *the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made his people free. This persuasion cometh of him that calleth you.*

II. *We respect the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, because they were established by the universal consent of the nation: and we reject the same ceremonies in the christian church, because no such consent hath ever been obtained.* The consent of the will is essential to the religion of a ceremony; and without such consent, the performance is not religion. Moses, who perfectly understood this, took particular care, as God directed him, to collect the sense of the people, to obtain their consent in form to his law, and to preclude all future pretence of imposition by engaging the whole nation to adopt it as their own.

Before the man of God published his commission, he *gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.* To this assembly *Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken to Mo-*

*ses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. The people believed* the messengers of God, and, being touched with a sense of divine goodness, in token of their consent to the whole plan of redemption on God's part, and obedience on their own, *bowed their heads and worshipped.*

As God continued to open his mind at different times to Moses, Moses continued to reveal it to the people. This was the method: *The Lord said, these are the words, which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses laid before their faces all the words, which the Lord had commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.* Hence this exhortation, Keep these statutes and judgments, and do them, for this is *your* wisdom. Hence this declaration, See, I have *set before thee* this day life and good, and death and evil. *Choose* life that thou mayest live. Hence this triumph, This commandment is not hidden from *thee*,——But the word is *in thy mouth*, and in *thy heart*, that thou mayest do it. —The Lord hath avouched thee to be his people, and *thou hast avouched* the Lord to be thy God. Hence, *Moses, when he had made an end of writing the words of the law in a book, until they were finished, said to the Levites, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.*

In succeeding times, solemn recognitions were

made; for *at the end of every seven years the people were gathered together, men and women, children and strangers, and in their hearing before all Israel the priests read the law, that such as had not known any thing might learn to fear the Lord, and to do all the words of his law.* The Jews were therefore always considered as a people in covenant with God, and their crimes were always aggravated by a consideration peculiar to their œconomy, each sin was a violation of a contract ratified by blood.

With great reason we respect such an establishment as this. Every thing in it is respectable; and above all, the great principles of legislation and religion demand our reverence. The Legislator was omnipotent and supreme, yet he did not terrify the Jews into submission and obedience by arbitrary dictates of thunder, and lightning, and darkness, and storm. The people were struck with the ensigns of the glory and majesty of their King, yet they retained a sense of their own dignity and duty, and humbly requested that they might confer and deliberate with Moses in the absence of splendor, and in the coolness of retirement. *Speak thou unto us,* said they to Moses, *all that the Lord shall speak unto thee.* The Lord replied, *They have well said all that they have spoken. I will speak unto thee all my statutes, and thou shalt teach them.* They are convinced that *God doth talk with* man. Let them retire *to their tents* again.

Many legislators have risen up in the papal church, and many ceremonies have been introduced into divine worship; but where is the Deity with his ensigns of glory? Where is Moses with tables written with the finger of God? Where is the universal conviction and consent of the people, whom Christ liberated by his blood? In the absence of these, human rites may intrude without the consent of some, and against the reasons and remonstrances of others: but the intrusion is imposition, not legislation; dominion, not proposal, deliberation, and consent.

III. *We respect the ceremonies of the Jews, because they were fit and proper for the purposes for which they were appointed: and we reject the same ceremonies in the Christian church, because they are unfit and improper.* It is impossible here to examine the whole Jewish ritual, to compare each part with the condition of the people, and to shew the propriety and fitness of all by such a comparison. Nothing would be easier: but we must now content ourselves with two examples.

Priests, under the Jewish œconomy, were commanded to officiate in linen garments: they performed divine service *in linen coats, linen vests, linen girdles, and linen mitres.* The reason of this institute is plain: priests offered sacrifices, and kept the whole place of worship fit for the reception and accommodation of the people, consequently they did a great deal (pardon the expression) they did a great deal of butchery and dirty work. It was necessary, therefore, they should wear gar-

ments, which though soon soiled, might be soon washed and cleansed. The tabernacle in the Wilderness, and the temple at Jerusalem would have been intolerable places without the precaution of linen garments, and constant washings. Fires, lamps, sacrifices of oil and salt, meal and wine; the killing of pigeons, lambs, and bullocks; the separating, burning, or distributing of entrails: the anointing with oil, the sprinkling with blood, the cleansing of lepers, and leprous houses; with many other services of a like kind, absolutely required the utmost attention to cleanliness. Hence the command, *Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord:* and hence also this cutting reproof, *Ye, priests, offer polluted bread upon my altar. The table of the Lord is polluted, his fruit and his meat are contemptible. Behold! I will spread the filth of your solemn feasts upon your faces, and one shall take you away with it.*

What sacrifices like these, what services resembling these, have we in the Christian church? Do we *come before the Lord with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?* do we *bow before the Most High God with burnt-offerings, or with calves of a year old? What doth the Lord require of us? His voice crieth* in our religious assemblies, and this is his whole requisition, *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God——Go your way,* Christians, *eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.* The God you serve

*will take no bullock out of your house, nor he-goat out of your fold. The beasts of the forest are his and the cattle upon a thousand hills; the world is his, and the fulness thereof. Offer unto him thanksgiving, and pay your vows unto the Most High.*

Let us take a second example. The Jews were ordered to distinguish their persons, their habits, their diet, and their customs from those of all other nations, and to keep themselves a separate people. *Ye shall not round the corners of your heads. Thou shalt not wear a garment of linen and woollen together. Thou shalt make fringes upon thy vesture. Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood. Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed.*

By these means they were *separated from all the people that were upon the face of the earth.* The reason of this is clear: God intended to bless all nations by the mediation of a Jew: it was therefore necessary to keep this people apart, and to ascertain this individual, that his person, whenever he should appear, might be at once distinguished from that of every impostor. The whole world was interested in his advent. No other nation offered to shew such a person, and the Jews always knew in what family to look for him.

The first disciples of this illustrious person, having found their promised master, left off all party distinctions. They ate, and drank, and dressed like other men, they said, *the love of Christ constrained them—to know no man after the flesh,*

*yea though they had known Christ after the flesh, yet thenceforth they would know him no more.* They accounted themselves *new creatures* in Christianity, and from them all old Jewish customs had past away. *Let no man judge you,* brethren, *in meat, or in drink, or in respect of holidays, or new moons, or festivals;* all *these were shadows of things to come,* Christianity is *the body,* the substance of all these rites, the sense of all Jewish signs.

IV. *We respect the Mosaical ritual, because the Institutor provided for the expence of it: and we reject the same ritual among Christians, because no provision is made by God to support it.* Difficult as it is at this distance of time to fix prices, and make calculations for the first ages of the world, we are certain the Jewish ceremonial was very expensive, and must have been ruinous to the nation, had not Supreme wisdom extraordinarily provided for it. The Lord did provide for the whole like himself, on principles of the strictest justice.

The Israelites had been deprived of their liberty in Egypt, and doomed to slavery by Pharoah. When they came out of that *iron furnace,* they took their wages at once by an innocent artifice: they borrowed of the Egyptians at once as much as, in the usual train of affairs, Pharoah would have exacted of his native subjects to expend in the employment of workmen. With these treasures they went into the wilderness. When Moses proposed to set up public divine worship, he ex-

torted nothing, he claimed no right to dispose of the peoples' property. God ordered him to *speak unto the children of Israel, that they should bring an offering unto the Lord,* it might be *gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, goats' hair, oil, spices, or precious stones.* God commanded him to *take these offerings,* provided *every man gave them willingly with his heart.* When these rough materials were to be wrought up by divers patterns for public use, the order was issued again to those only, both men and women, who were *of willing heart,* this is repeated five or six times in one chapter, When the service was first performed, whole waggon loads of rich utensils were voluntarily presented by the princes of the tribes. When a tribute was levied for the future support of the service, it was levied by contract, and the Lord of the universe engaged, as long as they should continue to support the dignity of his ritual, to *open unto them his good treasure, the heaven to give them rain unto their land in the season,* and *the earth to produce its increase.* He promised to avert *sicknesses* from their families, and *blasting and mildew* from their fields. He engaged to make them *plenteous in goods,* in sheep and beeves, and corn, and wine, and oil, he said *Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.* All the history of this people proves how punctually God fulfilled his engagement.

The Levites, too, who officiated in divine service, were provided for in a manner equally just. It was necessary, it seems, for the display of di-

vine justice in Egypt, that the eldest child of each family should die suddenly. Pharaoh had formerly doomed the male children of the Israelites to be put to death. The Israelites were excepted in both these dreadful decrees. In commemoration of this distinguishing mercy, God claimed the whole service of the eldest child of each family in Israel; and in lieu of them, he consented to take the whole tribe of Levi. When the land of promise was divided among the tribes, the share of the tribe of Levi, to which they had an equal claim with the rest, was distributed among the other tribes, and the Levites had no inheritance, on condition, however, that they who possessed the lands of Levi, should support the Levites wholly to serve in the temple, All this was done with universal consent; and after the death of Moses, when Joshua finished dividing the land, he engaged the whole nation to renew the contract, and (as one of our old divines expresses it) took a receipt in full by a general acknowledgement, that *there failed not ought of any good thing, which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel.*

A ritual thus supported by fruits of the industrious labour of the worshippers, by voluntary subscriptions of individuals, by reserved rents of lands, the property of those who parted with them on this condition, by extraordinary effusions of divine goodness, and by the free consent of a whole nation, has every thing in it to render it respectable: but where the Supreme Being gives no such

orders, and makes no such provision, expence is an article of great consideration, particularly to such as derive no benefit from the ritual, and especially in times of public penury and distress.

There is only one plausible pretence for the performance of Jewish rites in Christian worship, and this vanishes on examination. They are said to help the devotion of the common people. Our text suggests the contrary, and tells us—that rites of divine appointment were capable of abuse—that they were actually abused by the Jews—that the god of this world by them blinded the minds of unbelievers—and, if this were true of divine institutes, it is much more likely to happen in rites of mere human appointment.

Consider the condition of sensual Jews in the times of the prophets. *He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that burneth incense as if he blessed an idol.* There is a case in which sacrifice and murder, offering incense to the true God, and adoring a dumb statue are the same. This case always occurs, when ceremonies are performed without moral virtue. There is no moral virtue where there is no obedience to God in a ceremony, and there is no homage paid to God by performing either what he hath not appointed at all, or what he hath appointed, when we perform it for purposes different from those for which he appointed it. Ceremonies among the Jews were appointed to signify religious truths to the worshippers; but sensual worshippers rested

in the signs, and left the things signified unexamined, unfelt, unknown. *By ceremonies the god of this world blinded the minds of unbelieving Jews.*

Remark the condition of the common people in the church of Rome. In that church no expence hath been spared. All that architects, sculptors, painters, musicians, embroiderers can do, have been done to lead the populace, they say, to devotion: but have these evangelists succeeded? Alas! by the works of their hands the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the common people, so that they cannot distinguish *the wisdom of God, from a cunningly devised fable.*

Compare the primitive worship of our churches with the modern glory of Rome. Our public service consists of prayer, praise, and instruction. A person, who does not enter into the spirit of our service, presently discovers his state. Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ. The careless, who do not attend to, the ignorant, who do not understand, the obstinate, who do not pratise the doctrine taught, these have nothing in our worship to serve to conceal their real state from themselves; and this self exposure is their mercy, it is the first step toward wisdom and virtue. In the Papal church, people of the same description, who, if they knew themselves could not bear themselves, find in ceremonies a vail to cover the horrid void. Exercised in various gestures, elevated by music, dazzled and delighted with surrounding gaudy shews, they take these sensations for devotion; but

is this christian devotion, is it faith, is it repentance, is it humility, is it benevolence to man, is it mental improvement of ourselves, is it piety to God, by what name shall I call it? By such animal sensations the god of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers.

Judge within yourselves, brethren, whether that religion which is most simple and least compounded, be not most easy to perform, and best fitted to the frail and fallen state of mankind. Let your own experience speak: when you sing the praises of God with an instrument of music, have you not two things to do, to listen to the instrument, and to maintain in yourself a spirit of devotion; and is not a spirit of devotion easier maintained when you have nothing but that one work to do? Why should you multiply the difficulties of devotion; devotion, alas! is too difficult already to frail imperfect man.

In brief, Jewish cremonies are odious in christian worship—because God hath not appointed them—because they were appointed without the public consent—because they are not fitted to answer any valuable purpose—because they are a heavy, needless charge—and because they *blind the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

To conclude. Let us study religion in the oracles of God, and the Christian religion in the New Testament: there lies all our divine œconomy; there are all the doctrines which we are bound to

believe, all the duties we have to perform, all the motives to engage us to perform them; there Christ treats with us as Moses formerly treated with the Jews. He is the prophet like unto Moses. He comes with a divine commission to redeem slaves from sin, a tyrant worse than Pharoah. He sets before us a heavenly country, and shews us in his own example the direct road to it. He removes all the difficulties of the passage, and guards us through the wilderness with an outstretched arm. He gives us a law, not a burthensome ritual; but a law of love. With him God is well pleased, him let us hear. Let us *choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, for the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.*

Secondly. Let us try to simplify religion, to reduce it to its first principles, and to understand it by its elements. Let us form a body of divinity for our own private use. Let us extract, arrange, and analogize the ideas of sacred records. Let us study the God of the New Testament, we shall find him more a parent than a judge. Let us learn the Mediator of the New Testament, we shall find him in the amiable person of Jesus Christ, in a priest not stained with the blood of bulls and goats; but in one who by his own blood obtained redemption for us, and ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by him. Let us form a just notion of New Testament worship, we shall find it does not consist of

ritual observances *of days, and months, and times, and years,* it is not a subjection to *worldly rudiments, to ordinances of touch not, taste not, handle not ; but the fruit of the spirit* of christianity *is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.*

Thirdly. Let us remember whose we are, and whom we serve. Christians are not their own, they are bought with a price. They are not the servants of men in matters of religion and conscience. Liberated both by price and power they are bound by every sacred tie to serve him, who lived and died, and rose again for their deliverance. His revealed will, Christian, and not fashion, is your ecclesiastical law. Fashion ! popular custom ! What an empty unprincipled mind must that man have, who knows no other law in in religion ! Go, if you can allow yourself, go, follow the multitude, imitate fashion in your dress, your furniture, your amusements : but in religion it is at the peril of your salvation to go after such a guide.

Finally. Let us exert ourselves to the utmost to support and propagate primitive Christianity. Let us contribute cheerfully to the expence of disseminating the gospel of Christ. Let us have no share in the superstitions, none in the vices of the times. *Let us go forth without the camp bearing his reproach ;* animated with *the joy that is set before us, let us endure the cross and despise the shame.* Let us be *followers of them who*

*through faith and patience inherit the promises.* Methinks, we stand, to-day on hallowed ground, whence motives to zeal from all parts arise. This was the first nonconformist meeting-house tolerated in this city by royal indulgence. Hither your ancestors came, groaning under fines and exactions to pray, and hither your ministers came out of prison to preach. Times are happily altered, and we are thankful to God for the change; yet never let us forget that observation, which a pupil* of the first minister in this place made on our text, and with which we finish: "Christ's design by his gospel is to make a glorious discovery "of God to the minds of men. The design of "the devil is to keep men in ignorance, and as "he could not keep the gospel out of the *world*, "he maketh it his great business to keep it out of "the *hearts of men*."

* Matthew Henry, who was educated by Mr. Doolittle.

## APPENDIX.

*The following Hints concerning the Reading proposed in the Sermon are submitted, with all possible deference, to the Reader.*

2 Cor. iv. 3. Το ευαγγελιον—εν τοις απολλυμενοις εστι κεκαλυμμενον. 4. εν οις ο θεος—ετυφλωσε, &c.

THE present reading of these words in our English translation is, The *gospel is hid to them that are lost. In whom the God of this world hath blinded*, &c.

This translation does not seem good English. *The gospel is hid* TO *them.*——*The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,* IN WHOM. There is, then, at least inaccuracy enough in the translation to induce any man to examine the original.

The reading we propose is this: *The gospel is hid,* concealed, or vailed, AMONG or BY THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOLISHED, BY WHICH THINGS *the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.*

*Three* things must be examined. 1. The meaning of the verb απολλυμι. 2. The gender of the participle απολλυμενοις, and of the articles οις, τοις: and 3. The sense of the preposition εν.

I. We render the verb απολλυμι abolish. 1. The English word *abolish* (which generally signifies to *annul,* to make void, to repeal, to abrogate) comes from this very word. The Romans rendered it *aboleo,* and we make it *abolish.* No violence, therefore, is done to the verb by our translation.

2. Απολλυμι is a derivative, and the true *primitive* is λυω, solvo, to *loose.* Thus Mat. xvi. 19. Whatsoever thou shalt *loose,* or repeal, on earth, shall be *loosed,* or annulled, in heaven. Thus απολυσαι, Mat. i. 19. Joseph was minded to *put her away,* to loose, or annul the marriage contract. As therefore both the primitive and the derivative are used in the New Testament in our sense, the translation given above is not forced and unnatural. See Luke vi. 37.—ii. 29.—xiii. 12, &c.

3. The words λυω and απολυω are used in our sense in profane authors λυσεις βαξος. *Sophoc. Elect.* 945.—οκνου σε λυσω. *Sophoc. Trachin.* 184.—αδικουντας απελυσαν. *Xenoph. Mem.* iv. 8. 5, &c.

We conclude, therefore, that the word MAY be rendered *abolish — repeal — abrogate — annul — make void.*

II. In regard to the gender of the participle, and the articles, nothing can be determined from the terminations. In this case they may be masculine, they MAY be neuter. Here then is no argument against our translation.

III. The meaning of the preposition εν, is our last inquiry. Greek prepositions are in general of vague and uncertain meaning. This is remarkably so. Luke xiv. 1. *As* he went.—Rom. viii. 29. *Among* many brethren.—Luke iv. 32. His word was *with* power.—Mat. xxiii. 20. Swear *by* the altar.—Mat. vi. 7. *For* much speaking.—John v. 4. *Into* the pool.—1 Cor. vii. 15. God hath called us *to* peace.—Rom. viii. 34. *At* the right hand of God.—Mat. x. 32. Confess me *before* men.—Rom. xi. 2. What saith the scripture *of*, or concerning Elias?—Rom. xv. 5. One *towards* another, &c. It should seem then there is no impropriety in rendering the words in question thus: *The gospel is hid* AMONG *the things that are abolished,* BY *which things,* and so on.

We say, the words *may* be rendered thus; but in this, as in all other cases of vague, indeterminate single words, how they *must*, and ought to be rendered, can only be determined by the con-

struction of the whole sentence, and by the scope of the place. What we think of this we have spoken at large in the discoure. There seems to be nothing in the construction against our sense of the passage; and every thing in the context, coherence, and scope in favour of it.

FINIS.

# SERMON VI.

## THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST NOT OF THIS WORLD.

Preached at *Broadmead, Bristol*, August 28. 1781, at the annual meeting of the Education Society.

JOHN viii. 36.

*My kingdom is not of this world.*

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

THERE are, you know, in christianity, as in all other sciences, a few principal leading truths, from which all the less considerable parts of the science flow, and on the clear understanding of which depends our knowledge of the whole. If our ideas of first principles be dark and confused, our notions of all consequences arising out of them will partake of the gloom: if on the contrary, we clearly comprehend the grounds of a science, a perspicuity will diffuse itself through every part.

In natural religion the doctrine of the being and perfections of God is a truth of this sort; for all the moral obligations, which we deduce from this first principle, will be contracted or liberal, benevolent or partial, according to the ideas we form of God, the first great cause. In the christian religion the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ is a truth of this kind; for if we enter into

the natural excellencies, the views and dispositions of Jesus Christ, if we make out, so to speak, what sort of man he was, we shall obtain clear notions of that whole body of divine truth, with which his wise and generous soul blessed the world.

In complying therefore with the laudable custom of this society, of opening term with a discourse of christian theology, in the presence of the church, I have chosen the subject contained in the text as a leading truth, being fully persuaded that all the ends intended by your benefactors, all the designs of your education, all the wishes of your respectable tutors, and all the desires of our ministers and churches will be best answered by your well understanding, and thoroughly imbibing the spirit of these admirable words, *my kingdom is not of this world.*

It would be useless at present to narrate the history contained in the context, it is sufficient to observe, that the text is an answer given by Jesus Christ to a question put by Pilate, and that the design of this corrupt judge in putting the question is the proper clue to the answer. Pilate, probably, inquired on his *own* account, and he is supposed by some to have been a gentleman, who, having received a liberal education, and having adopted that philosophy, which affirms, that man cannot distinguish truth from error, that we can know nothing except that we do know nothing, sarcastically said to the prisoner, *what is truth?* Is it for frail man to affirm! Mortals, do they know truth! If we put together the answers of

our Lord to this inquiry, we have reason to believe, that the expression, *my kingdom is not of this world,* is equal to saying, my doctrine is not a human science.

Pilate put the question also in the name, and in the sense of *the Rabbies.* The Jews expected a temporal Messiah. Jesus, without pomp and worldly power, did not answer their expectations. Pilate knew no more of this than the Jews told him; but at their instigation he inquired whether Jesus assumed a character, that did not belong to him; *am I a Jew! thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?* In answer to this question in the Rabbinical sense, our Lord said, *my kingdom is not of this world;* that is, the Jews mistake the prophets, the end of my coming is not answered by grandeur, my dominion is not supported by secular power, nor is my church the seat of worldly pomp and glory.

Pilate considered himself, thirdly, as entrusted with Cæsar's affairs, and it was necessary for him to give on all public occasions, full proof of his attachment to the Emperor's interest, by discountenancing every thing that might tarnish his master's glory, or diminish that empire, which his court made it a law by any means both to acquire and retain. In this view, to affirm, *my kingdom is not of this world,* is equal to saying, my disciples are not animated with such passions as courtiers feel, my subjects are not fired with ambition, not given

to intrigue, not prepared by my laws to deceive and to destroy; my morality is calculated to produce the safety and happiness of all mankind, not to serve the ambitious views of particular families pagan or christian.

In these three different lights we shall consider the text, and we humbly implore the blessed Spirit to impress the word on all our hearts.

*The gospel is not a human science.* It must have struck every reader, even the most superficial, that, when the apostles first taught christianity, the wise men of their times accounted the doctrine folly, and the teachers fools. It must also appear equally clear, that the apostles who recorded this in history, and transmitted it to posterity, did not allow the truth of the charge; on the contrary, they constantly affirmed that their gospel was wisdom · · · · wisdom among the upright · · · · THE WISDOM OF GOD.

Were we to enter minutely into the subject, we would affirm, that christianity differs from a human science chiefly in *five* respects. First, human sciences originate in general in *human* intelligence, and each in particular in the exercise of some one operation of the mind, so that each science may be traced to some mental power, from which it proceeds: but christianity, the plan of redemption, neither sprang from the playful fancy of an enthusiast, nor from the cool deliberate judgment of a philosopher, of inferior or superior genius; it is not the production of human hopes or fears; it is neither the delirium of the weak, nor the wisdom

of the wise; but to use again an expression of an apostle, it is in the whole, and it is in each component part, *the wisdom of God.* Human sciences differ in their *nature* from christianity; the former may not improperly be called a collection of speculations regularly arranged, the latter is a narration of facts, few in number, but full of vigour. What we call doctrines of the gospel are, strictly speaking, facts, and to preach the gospel is to state these facts in their native purity and perspicuity. Human sciences differ from the christian religion in *the sort of evidence* produced to give conviction, and to engage belief. In the first, arguments are conjectural, one wise and learned man affirms, another as wise and learned as he denies, the disciple hesitates, suspects both, thinks for himself, and finds himself out at sea: but our prophets and apostles come without a peradventure, and *thus saith the Lord,* is the introduction to all they say. Hence this exulting language of a disciple of revelation, *he brought me up out of an horrible pit—and set my feet upon a rock—and established my goings, and put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God.* Christianity is superior to human sciences in *motives to action,* for the magnitude of the objects proposed to examination at once commands the attention, and sways the affections of the soul. Finally, human sciences are accompanied here with an imperfect *pleasure,* and with a momentary *reputation,* and at the grave the first expires, and the last takes its leave, and the man of science, disrobed of literary attain-

ments, sinks into moral size, ranks with the vulgar, and is left to perish with the idiot. The christian, on the contrary, derives from his religion, even in this life, a *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, a joy that indemnifies him for all he suffers here, and in the world to come he *drinks rivers of pleasures for evermore.*

Survey, christian, the heavenly design; a God of infinite perfection, whose wisdom is equal to his power, whose justice and goodness are equal to both, a God necessarily *exalted above all blessing, and praise*, behold him uniting your happiness with his own honour, sending *the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person*, to relieve you from the misery of ignorance, the agony of vice, the displeasure of your Judge, and the horrors of hell; behold him opening the invisible world to your faith, and treating you *not as a servant but as a friend;* hear words dropping from his lips *sweeter than honey, and the honey-comb;* imbibe the spirit of this religion, altogether divine, and exclaim, *this is not the manner of man, O Lord!* Thy gospel is not a human science! *Thy kingdom is not of this world.*

Many are the practical uses of this doctrine, at present I content myself with one. Let us estimate, but let us not over-rate human literature.

Learning, we confess, gives one man a great superiority over another, and makes one differ from another almost as much as man differs from a beast. It informs the judgment, fires the fancy, redeems, if not creates taste; it casts the conduct

and moulds the man; it capacitates for many offices in life; it expands, refines, and elevates every operation of humanity, it takes a hint and trains it up into a noble science, full of beneficial effects to mankind; it throws a sunshine over whole kingdoms, and adorns every individual.

Literature, too, opens to all its disciples ample fields of pleasure, and we are not afraid to affirm, that there is nothing in all the scenes of dissipation and rounds of pleasure, nothing in all the sensual gratifications, or even lawful amusements of an illiterate youth comparable in point of pleasure with that sober, rational, heartfelt joy, which an industrious investigator of science feels. His retirement is absence from perplexing incidents, his application is an approach to peace, pleasure and joy.

The bible, we allow, is a learned book, the language, the geography, the history, the chronology, the natural philosophy, yea any part of it, the botany, the scripture herbs and plants, all find honourable employment for learning; and sound critical knowledge can do much to unravel some difficulties, and to elucidate many passages in these original records of the church. For these reasons, and for many more of the same kind, you will think yourselves obliged, young gentlemen, so to run the literary race that you may obtain a prize.

Yet, after all, should you take me aside, and coolly ask me, is human learning essential to preaching the gospel, I would reply by requiring you to define your terms. Do you mean the gospel of the church of *Rome?* Do you mean to include

in your term, gospel, all the incidentals recorded in the bible? If either of these be intended, I affirm, human literature is essential to preaching the gospel.

Behold the holy catholic and apostolic church of *Rome*, opening her arms to receive a minister. Observe that harmless youth doomed to spend his life in her service. Hark! she requires him to take a book, which says, my kingdom is *not* of this world, and by that very book to prove that this kingdom *is* of this world. She requires him to offer violence to revelation, reason, and common sense, by affirming that each particle of a piece of consecrated bread is in a thousand places at one time the whole flesh, and blood, and bones of a person now in heaven. Alas! devoted youth! All my soul dissolves in pity for you! you need the subtilty of a thousand capacities. You want an inexhaustible fund of ingenuity and depravity. You should possess all possible literature, that what artifice and sophistry cannot do, a well-wrought vail of words may effect. You should avail yourself of learning at least to conceal the horror of charging all your monstrous propositions to the account of that plain man, Jesus Christ. But have you forgot the fate of the jesuits? How can you hope to succeed in an attempt, in which a whole order of the most acute geniuses, and most accomplished scholars in *Europe* have failed, so failed, that, at last, for overacting their part, for exposing what ought to have been concealed, their goddess was obliged to suppress their order, and

dismiss them from her service? And you, I ask again, who are you to undertake to support such a desperate cause?

If by gospel you mean all the incidents recorded in the bible, you must have literature. If you would give us the etymology of words, the weight of the shekel, the capacity of the homer, the learning of *Egypt*, the history of places and persons in the holy land, you must be learned. If you would describe the architecture of the temple, the jewellery of the breast-plate, the tapestry of the vail, you must have genius and literature. If you would number the passovers in Christ's ministry, the weeks of Daniel, and the years in which each part of the canon was written, you must be learned: but all this is not what I mean by gospel, all this is a sort of accompaniment only to be used in preaching the gospel as the Holy Spirit has set us an example in writing the gospel, that is incidentally.

Remember, gentlemen, I am not speaking of the ornaments of preaching. Preaching admits of all the ornaments, that accuracy of language, elegance of style, truth and beauty of imagery, sweetness of pronunciation, and universal knowledge can afford. Collect as many of these beauties as you can, use them as your own good sense directs, and according to circumstances of time, place, and persons, grace, (if this be grace) grace the christian pulpit with eloquence of speech, and elegance of action; do more, defend, elucidate and illustrate the facts recorded by the evangelists; yet

allow me to affirm, the gospel may be preached, and well and effectually preached without all this.

By gospel, I mean *(bona fide* as we say) the gospel according to Matthew, the gospel according to Mark, the gospel according to the four Evangelists, the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ. You ask, is human literature essential to *preaching* this gospel? I answer this question by asking another, is human literature essential to *understanding* this gospel? Pause a moment before you answer this question, and think, did the Prince of preachers, the prophet sent from God to instruct the poor and illiterate, did he speak so obscurely, so unintelligibly, as to render it necessary for a scholar to come between him and his auditors to explain his meaning, and that at a time when there was so little learning in the world? What are his subjects, and how does he speak of them? Is the difficulty in the facts or in his manner of narrating them? When he declares, *I am come to seek and to save that which is lost;* is learning necessary to prove, that the body is lost by diseases in the grave; that the soul is lost by error and vice in misery and woe; that to save the body is to raise it from the dead, and to save the soul is to make it wise, and good, and happy? If he affirms, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,* is there any thing hard and mysterious in this? The gospel bears an exact analogy to the world of nature, and as the sun and the stars, the earth and the sea, the world

and all its treasures lie open to all mankind, and are enjoyed by the peasant as truly as by the philosopher, so are the truths of christianity, supposing, all along, the language, in which they are proposed, to be understood. Alas! you children and servants, you poor and illiterate people, you sick and dying penitents, what would become of you, if the gospel were a learned science?

In the papal world the gospel is yet considered as a great mystery, religious truths are said to lie in a well so deep, that none but seraphical, angelical doctors can draw them up for public use: but this doctrine is inculcated to serve the prudent purposes of stupifying the laity, and of elevating an ambitious clergy to dictate in religion, to plunder the peoples' property, and to riot in all the luxuries of life: but in our churches to affirm, that the gospel is hard and abstruse, that the minister is the *sine quo non*, is a cruel trick unworthy of an upright ingenuous man!

We said, the text, *my kingdom is not of this world*, is equal to saying, my church is not the seat of worldly pomp and glory. The Jewish prophets had foretold the advent of the Messiah, and they had described him, and his kingdom by a profusion of noble images. The Rabbies, who knew no other glory than that of the world, had expounded these passages according to their own gross ideas of the great and sublime, and hence their abhorrence of the simplicity of Christ. We, christians, have been taught, that the christian œconomy far *exceeds in glory*, both the glory of the

world, and the glory of the mosaical dispensation. Theirs was a local, ours is an universal religion.

The Jewish religion may be divided into four parts; there is a doctrinal, a moral, an experimental, and a political part of Judaism. The *doctrines* of the old testament, the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, a state of future rewards and punishments, the government of providence, the blessings of grace, are incorporated into the christian religion. The *morality* of the Jews, too, is established by the gospel, and in this view our Lord declared, he *came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it*. The *experimental* part of Judaism, also, belongs to our œconomy, and the book of psalms is a fine picture of the christian heart, there the passions play, and the emotions of pleasure and pain, excited by religious objects, are expressed in all their native simplicity and beauty. But the *polity*, the polity of Judaism, is abolished by Jesus Christ; it is not incorporated, it could not possibly be incorporated into christianity without defeating the design of Christ to make his an universal religion.

To exemplify this. In the ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, kings presided, and officiated in religion: but Christ alone is king in the christian church, he only gives religious law, and one of his statutes is, *call no man master upon the earth*, in choosing a religion be governed by your own understanding. In the Jewish church there was a successional priesthood; but christians have no priest, Christ is their priest, their only priest, and

he alone performs the two great works of priesthood; he offered himself *once for all* a sacrifice for sin, and *he ever liveth to make intercession* for sinners. The Jewish religion was established by law: but christianity cannot be established by any human laws, and it is not established by any divine law; it is not, it ought not to be incorporated by force with armies, and navies, and universities, and civil offices. As well might we establish by law beauty of person, symmetry of parts, genius for poetry, or painting, strength of memory, friendship, generosity, or good sense. Christianity is the accomplishment of the mind; can mental accomplisments be established by human law? Judaism admitted a whole nation into church-fellowship: but the christian œconomy admits only believers in Christ to compose their societies.

The proper, practical use of this doctrine lies in the application of these truths to real life. We are citizens of a community, *subjects* of a prince, let us detest that dangerous doctrine of a late prelate, a prelate of great name too, that there is an alliance between church and state. What! when I become a believer in Christ, when I associate myself with fifty more believers for the purpose of worshipping God, do I, do we all cease to be subjects, and become *allies*; may we contract with government at a given price to perform that sort of worship, which shall best suit our governors for the time being; may we elevate ourselves into civil independence, and sink the worship of Almighty God into a job? Let us claim religious liberty

but let us not make it a cloke of licentiousness. Let us recollect the text, *my kingdom is not of this world.*

Suffer me, more particularly, Young Gentlemen, to exhort you to attend to this part of our subject. Never affect the dignity of priesthood; ever despise the misery of priestcraft. Never affect show and parade in religion. The little excresences of pride, the paltry exhibitions of vanity in protestant churches are reflections on the sense of those, who import them, for imported they are from Italy. Pardon a homely comparison, and, if it be wrong to expose superstition to contempt, *forgive me,* at least for once, *this wrong.* Really, when I compare the little cheap decorations of reformed churches with the masterpieces of Italy, our gaudy days with their grand processions, our beggarly imitations of their pontificial magnificence, I call their's pomp, our's poverty; they are nature in the theatre of the metropolis, we are strollers, uttering bombast in cast-off finery in a booth at a fair. Prayer, baptism, the Lord's supper, explaining a truth, enforcing a duty, do these simple exercises, divine in their origin, manly in their performance, and effectual in producing all the ends for which they were instituted, do they require the despicable shreds of papal trumpery to engage mankind to practise them! *My kingdom is not of this world.*

Our Lord said truly to Pilate, *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.* Yes! most adorable Redeemer! if thy kingdom

required splendour, thy servants have such a high veneration for thee, they would expend all, they would *spend and be spent* in thy service! Nature and art in rich profusion, the architecture of Greece and the music of Italy, statues, vases, pictures, habits, the treasures of the East, and the refinements of the West, the spices of Arabia, the cabinets of antiquaries, the jewels of princes, the luxurious pomp of the most magnificent monarchs should adorn thy palace, and enrich thy throne—but—*thy kingdom is not of this world.*

Lastly, *The church of Christ is not the seat of faction,* it doth not resemble Cæsar's court. Faction for the universal despotism of one is conspiracy against the rights of all mankind. By such a faction Augustus had risen to empire, and had transmitted the iron rod of absolute dominion to one of his family less wary and more wicked than himself. Judea had been subdued, and was become, when Herod and Pilate ruled, a province of the empire. The riches and honours of the province were lavished on a few worthless creatures of the court, and they, amidst all their pomp and plunder, were always in fear of detection, so that when Jesus appeared surrounded with the multitude they suspected (for they knew no higher motives than their own) they suspected, and exclaimed, sedition! *He Stirreth up sedition!* to quiet these imaginary fears they seized Jesus, and accused him before the governor. *Art thou a king?* said Pilate. I am a King, replied the prince of peace: but not such a King as you suppose. Mine

is moral dominion, which no weapons can obtain. The enemies I oppose are ignorance, pride, malice, avarice, and all other evil dispositions. My instruments of government are a few plain instructions, and my own perfect example of virtue. My end is answered, when the human soul is freed. The honours I bestow are, in this life, consciousness of rectitude, and prospect of immortal bliss, and in a future state *pleasures for evermore. My kingdom is not of this world.*

Were this doctrine properly understood, it would produce the most beneficial effects. You, Gentlemen, are bound to understand it in all its parts. Let us, then, distinguish the *end* of government from the *means* of governing. Every society is incorporated for some end, and every society pro poses means to obtain the end of its incorporation. In bad civil governments the end is *dominion,* in some over the property, in others over the liberty, in some over the consciences, in others over the lives of subjects, and in some over all these together. In such states, means are indifferent, and whatever promotes the end is proper; justice is out of the question. Learning or ignorance, virtue or vice, fraud or force, duplicity or sincerity, publick virtue or popular debauchery, christianity or paganism, each is a proper mean in different cases, and at different times, provided it obtains the end, dominion. The proper administrators of such a government ought not to be men of bad principles, for they would not use virtuous means, when virtuous means would operate, nor ought

they to be men of good principles, for they could not make use of vicious means, when vicious means would operate: but they ought to be men of no principles, prepared for every work, to swear or to violate an oath, to flatter or to frown, to form an alliance or to dissolve it, to protect or to destroy. Is the christian church, think you, a society incorporated for the end of acquiring dominion over mankind, and is the teacher sent from God the destroyer of principle? *My kingdom is not* a bad civil government, like some *of this world.*

In a commercial society, as in a trading company, the direct end of its incorporation is *gain*, and here again the virtues and vices of trade are only means employed to obtain the end. In a university incorporated by charter, and in an academy associated by choice, the direct end is *human learning*, and virtuous actions are interwoven in the constitution as just and proper means to obtain the end, literature. The christian church is not incorporated for either of these purposes; it is not a shop, in which religion is a trade; it is not a school in which men are taught to dispute and declaim. *My kingdom is not* to be degraded into a mere human society, constituted for the momentary purposes *of this world.*

The direct end of a good civil government, as the British, is *civil liberty:* yet even this end, noble as it is, is not the end of the constitution of the christian church. Had Jesus Christ intended to

give us a perfect system of civil polity, he would have determined the best form of government, the rights of subjects and the prerogatives of princes, and so on: but *his kingdom is* superior in its end and design, his views are far more extensive and noble than those of the best civil governments *of this world.*

What then is the direct *end* of the kingdom of Christ? It is, in general, *moral excellence:* It is, in particular, the production of the greatest truth and virtue, issuing in the utmost happiness to man, and the highest glory to God. No legislator of ancient Greece, no emperor of Rome, no republican senate, no assembly of nobles, no regal council, no magnanimous monarch ever proposed, or ever could propose the ennobling of the human mind, and the refinement of the heart as the ultimate ends of government. Thine, Lord Jesus! was the glory, the unrivalled glory of forming a *kingdom not of this world,* a kingdom formed to gratify the universal passion, the unquenchable thirst for immortal happiness in man!

The means instituted to obtain this end are *not carnal, but mighty through God,* they are the holy scriptures read and preached, the ordinaces of baptism and the Lord's supper, the interchanging of kind offices, all influenced by the blessed Spirit, in one word, copying the example of Christ, who is to his disciples both the gospel and the law.

Some of you, Young Gentlemen, will soon be called to exercise your ministry in some of our churches. Reduce, I beseech you, these peace-

able principles to practice. *Renounce* all *hidden things of dishonesty.* Despise collusion and intrigue, fall into no faction under pretence of religion. Respect the man, who respects the rights of all mankind, and avoid him, who considers the images of God as beasts to be subdued and saddled, and ridden and slaughtered at pleasure. Enjoy the religious liberty allowed in this your native country, and inculcate all the social virtues, that contribute to the peace of society. Remember, you will be ministers of a religion not of this world, a religion which in this world exposes its disciples to sufferings, supportable only by a prospect of a world to come. Keep that prospect open, that world in perpetual view, and never forget, that the New Testament is not a code of human law, that, although you are Ministers of Christ, yet as ministers of Christ you are not empowered to meddle in secular affairs.

Give me leave to conclude with one caution relative to the general doctrine of the text, and one word applicable to your particular situation.

The doctrine of the text has been abused by two sorts of expositors. Your religion, say some, does not intermeddle with the affairs of this world. You, therefore, the disciples of it have nothing to do with secular matters. To you it ought to be indifferent whether your country enjoy liberty, or suffer despotism. You are subjects of a *kingdom not of this world.* Be content with the felicity of believing a future state, and imbibe for the present

the spirit of non-resistance, and passive obedience. Others, on the contrary, exclaim, your religion is *not of this world.* This is a strong presumption against the divinity of it. Were it of God, it would certainly provide for civil liberty, the noble, unalienable right of all mankind. A religion not of this world! A religion then not fit for a citizen of the world! A religion fit for only a little, narrow, sneaking soul!

We reply to both our opponents by affirming—Before Jesus Christ came into the world mankind were men—had he never come, all mankind would have been naturally and necessarily possessed of all the rights of humanity—the best mode of enjoying these rights is a production of reason, and reason unassisted by revelation is competent to the investigation.—When Jesus Christ came, he came not to destroy our humanity, or to alienate our rights—he never transferred our natural right to life, liberty, and property to any individual—on the contrary, supposing all civil rights, he taught us a religion admirably fitted to the enjoyment of them—his religion, far from depressing the human spirit, kindles in it a passion for religious freedom, which prisons and dungeons, fires and flames can never subdue.—If as disciples of Christ we be not obliged to sedition, neither are we as subjects of Christ obliged to submit to slavery.—The whole business of civil government is analogous to the practice of an art, or the study of a science, and our religion influences that as it influences them—Christianity is a general energy applicable to

every good pursuit, and dissociable with every inhuman plan.—Do you say, Christ's kingdom is not a system of civil government? We allow it. What then? Reproach us that it is not a system of anatomy! The conclusion would be alike in both cases. You say, Christ's *kingdom is not of this world.* Christians ought to be indifferent to the rights of mankind. What! when I commence a christian, do I cease to be a man! Does the Son of God propose a barter of my natural rights for his religious prerogatives! Glorious prerogative! The privilege of a brute!

Having subjoined this caution, it only remains, that I congratulate you, Young Gentlemen, on your happy situation. Behold, this church, our distant churches, the reverend fathers and brethren present all unite in praises to God for this institution, they rejoice, that in these depraved times you are inclined to dedicate yourselves to the Lord, and they think it will be your own faults, if you do not excel in sound learning and true religion. We have no suspicions; we are full of hopes; you will, yes, you will answer our expectations. Go, generous youths, our hearts go with you, retire to your studies, and surmount all the labour of learning for the pleasure of being learned, and for the joy of hoping to preach the gospel more unexceptionably; go, instruct the ignorant, relieve the distressed, pour the balm of the gospel into the bosoms of the guilty, reprove exhort, with all long suffering and patience; adorn our pulpits with the pure doctrines of the new tes-

tament, and enforce the doctrines you preach by a holy life and conversation.

Will you forgive me, if I interrupt for a moment your pleasure. I foresee, without a spirit of prophecy, the trials that await you. You will preach a doctrine not of this world; the world will despise you, as the world despised your Master, and some supercilious Pilate will sneer and say, *what is truth?* In vain you will study and be wise, worldly philosophers will account you ignorant, because you will not worship the classical gods they adore. In vain will you imbibe the spirit and imitate the example of Christ, men of time-serving principles will account you uncandid, morose and severe. Yea, some of your brethren, animated with the passions of envy and pride will suspect, or affect to suspect your orthodoxy, or piety, or both. If two of this sort meet, each will pour the delicious poison of slander into the others ear. If you be popular, you will be hated for what you cannot and ought not to help: if you be not: you will be neglected and forgotten when you most of all need support. If the God of nature hath formed you alert, and you have wit, vivacity and fire, although you employ all to good purposes, yet some grave drone, who owes his gravity to constitution, will tax you with levity, and, arrogantly making himself a standard of excellence, will call innocent mirth a mark of reprobation, and will require you to prove the soundness of your faith by fetching great deep sighs and groans, as if you were always at a funeral. If you have a natural

gravity, others, full of sprightliness, will say you are unsociable and dull. If you use learning to elucidate scripture, some ignorant clown will call you pedantick, and say you put learning in the place of the spirit, and for your sake will exclaim against learning itself. If you speak plainly and in popular style, others will say, you do not respect your auditory. Preach all your system of doctrine in one sermon, you will be accounted scholastical and unrefined. Preach only one truth in one sermon, and it will be suspected, you do not believe the rest. Open the privileges of grace, and you will deny the law: preach the law, and you will deny the influence of grace.—And you, what will you do in all these skirmishes? you will, perhaps, appeal from the partial opinions of men, who after all know little or nothing of you, but by hearsay, to the merciful tribunal of God. Each of you will acknowledge and deplore his infirmities, and yet he will add, *Lord! thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* You will say, *innumerable evils have compassed me about. My iniquities are more than the hairs of my head. I am not able to look up. My heart faileth me.* And yet *I delight to do thy will. O God, thy law is within my heart. I have not concealed thy loving kindness. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. Remember me, O my God for good!*

Go then, enter the sanctuary of God. Realize our wishes. *Fight the good fight of faith.* Help the feeble hand to *lay hold on eternal life.* Ani-

mate all this assembly to continue to support this noble and generous institution. Let all your benefactors, your parents, your ministers, your tutors, the whole church see the good seed of a learned and virtuous education bring forth an hundred fold. Repair, if it be repairable, the loss all our churches have sustained by the late removal of the first and best of our ministers from this place. Alas!.... I feel with you!....I must not open wounds, which time hath begun to close. Our *Father, where is he? The prophet, doth he live for ever?* Yes, the father is here. The prophet doth live, he survives in his son and successor. I trust I may add, *instead of the fathers shall be the children, a seed to serve the Lord for a thousand generations.* To him be honour and glory for ever, Amen.

FINIS.

[END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.]

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